

305
A STORY OF OLD MADRAS

THE
MERRY
MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 12th APRIL, 1935

2713
No. 15

No Impending Apology

He: You are making a fool
of me.

She: I always take things
as I find them.



The Correct Solution is:

1. TONGUE
2. VASE
3. AUDIENCE

4. DELAWARE
5. ROAD
6. SICKNESS

7. NECK
8. HANDCUFFS

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| 6 | P. R. Ramanathan, Madurai. | 16 | L. R. R. R. R. R. R. R. |
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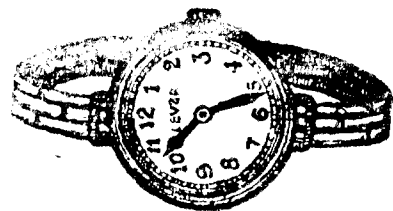
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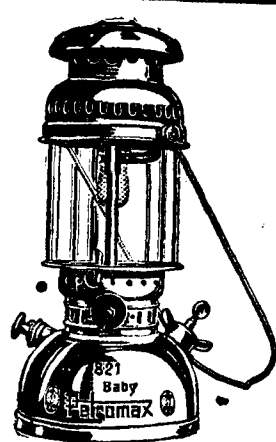
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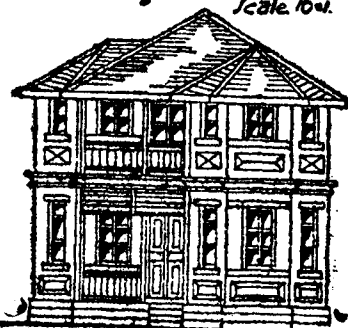
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| 2. — ASH | beat. | 4. BL— | stain. |

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2	H-N-Y	Sweet thick fluid	6	GRAND--	Grand-mother
3	D--KEY	Ass	7	CLO-URE	End
4	S-L-AN	Mohammedan Sovereign	8	FAM-	Rumour

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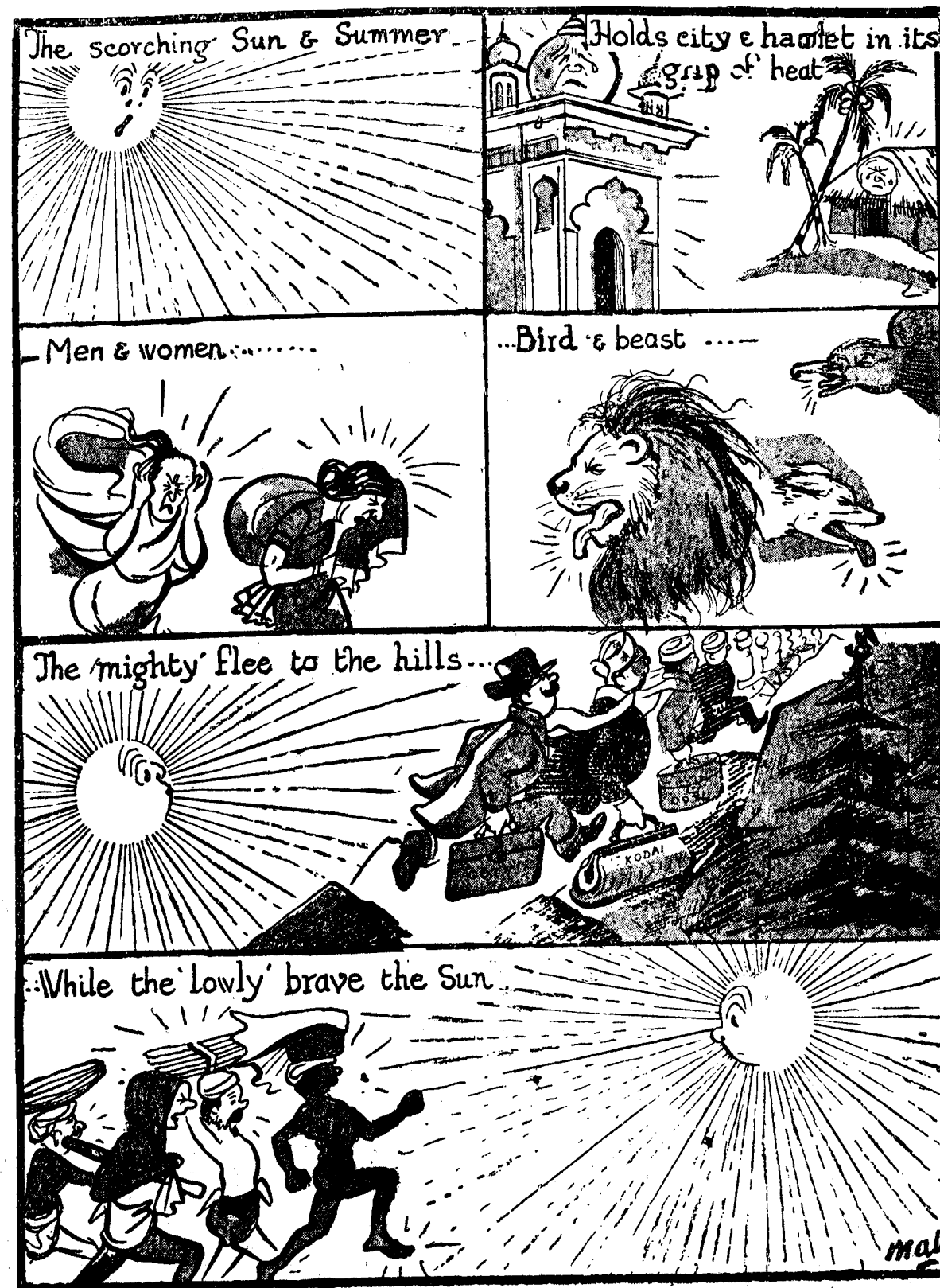
THE MERRY MAGAZINE

Vol. III

MADRAS, 13th APRIL, 1935.

No. 15

SUMMER IS HERE !



IN 1753, there died in Fort St. George an aged Armenian merchant named Georg Papalos. In those days, the official and mercantile classes lived within the Fort. The rest of the population, numbering a quarter of a million, was crowded into an incredibly small area, of which Broadway was the main thoroughfare and the broadest street. Between Broadway and the Fort was an open space.

In his will, Georg Papalos directed that a sum of fifty gold dollars be placed in his tomb for the repose of his soul, and for use as travelling allowance during his last journey. The worthy Armenian gentleman was accordingly laid to rest in a massive and ornate tomb. It was a far more imposing place than the huts of the poor weavers, through whose industry the deceased had amassed his fortune. This great tomb, along with many others, stood within the enclosure now occupied by the High Court. There lay Georg Papalos, with a bag containing fifty gold dollars in his shrivelled hand.

It happened that the military commandant of the Fort was one Colonel Spleen, a rough and overbearing military adventurer, while the Chaplain of the settlement was the Reverend Meek, a gentle and godly man. It also happened that the living accommodation within the Fort was severely over-crowded, a state of affairs which has persisted to this day. The Colonel complained to the Governor-in-Council that the quarters allotted to him were unworthy of the dignity of a military commander, and he demanded the large and convenient house close to St. Mary's church, occupied by the Reverend Meek. This request was granted. The Colonel was given the larger house, and the Chaplain was moved to an inferior dwelling farther down the street.

The controversy caused the Colonel to hate the Chaplain. The Colonel professed irreligion which was fashionable in the eighteenth century, and took every opportunity to humiliate the Man of God. The military commander, in his front pew, openly yawned and snored during the Sunday morning service, which it was then compulsory for all European residents to attend.

No sooner had Georg Papalos been laid to rest in his handsome tomb, than the peace of the grave was rudely disturbed. General Lally came sailing from Pon-

THE Colonel and the CHAPLAIN

A STORY OF OLD MADRAS

By 'EMBUSQUE'

dicherry, landed his army at the Customs House, and laid siege to Fort St. George. Lally brought a battery of siege-guns with him and the gunners found in the tomb of Georg Papalos a strong and ready-made emplacement. Other tombs were similarly employed. The Frenchmen simply ran a gun into each tomb, knocked a hole in the side facing the Fort, and began to bombard the defences in comfort.

The siege dragged on; but all Lally's attacks were repulsed. At last the English made a sortie, captured the tombs, and drove the French back to their ships.

As soon as the siege was over, the Governor issued a proclamation that the tombs in the enclosure must be razed to the ground, as they were a menace to the security of the Fort. All the tombs were dismantled except one, which contained the remains of the Governor's favourite child. This may still be seen in its original position. Everything else was removed, and the bones re-buried in St. Mary's church. The tomb-stones were used to repave the floor of the church, which had been damaged during the siege.

The executor of Georg Papalos visited the tomb of the Armenian as soon as the siege was over, to inspect the damage and to arrange the demolition of the grave. Naturally, the upper compartment was in a state of great dilapidation and confusion. He descended into the vault, and was relieved to find that the actual burial-chamber was quite undisturbed. Not quite undisturbed—the bag of fifty gold dollars had been taken from the hand of Georg Papalos.

The executor reported the matter to the Third-in-Council, who was Customs Officer and Chief of Police. The missing coins were Maria Theresa gold dollars, with a cross scratched under the effigy of the Empress.

The Third-in-Council sent for the Pedda-Naik, and told him to take the hundred armed slaves who comprised the police-force, and visit every tavern in Broadway. Anyone possessing a gold Maria Theresa dollar, with a cross scratched on it, was to be arrested.

The hundred armed slaves combed the taverns. Such visitations were not unusual, for in those days Broadway was an ill-famed and riotous thoroughfare, and the taverns were sinks of iniquity.

At last, in the Royal George tavern, close to the present offices of the *Merry Magazine*, the Pedda-Naik was handed a gold Maria Theresa dollar. There was a cross scratched under the Empress' head. The landlord, a Portuguese, said it had just been given him by a British soldier, whom he pointed out. The soldier was put in irons and taken back to the Fort.

The soldier was Thomas Holt. He admitted having possessed the gold dollar. He said it had been given him by a Dutch sailor, in exchange for a handsome French sword, captured by the soldier during the attack on the tombs.

The Third-in-Council handed over Thomas Holt to a drum-head court martial. The president of the Court was Colonel Spleen. Thomas Holt admitted having

at 9 a.m. the following morning. "Send for the Chaplain," sneered the Colonel. "He is the only one who can help you now. Tell him your fairy-tale about the sword and the Dutch sailor."

The Reverend Meek was brought to the condemned dungeon by the South Sea Gate, and he listened to the soldier's story. He believed it. He was convinced that Holt was telling the truth. But it was now night, and Thomas Holt was to be shot in the morning. The clergyman hurried to the taverns of Broadway, enduring ribaldry and humiliation in a desperate search for evidence.

He found it. He found the Dutch sailor in the Royal George tavern, very drunk, and wearing a handsome gold-chased sword. Between hiccups, the Dutchman related how he had bought his sword from an English soldier for a gold dollar. Where had he got the gold dollar? Why, from a French gunner, in that very same tavern, only a few days before. During the siege, the life of Broadway had gone on as usual, undisturbed by the military operations a few hundred yards way; and when off-duty, the Frenchmen spent their time in the taverns.

The drunken Dutchman refused to accompany the Chaplain to the Fort, and there was no way of compelling him. The English settlement of Madras was merely an extra-territorial port in the dominions of the Nawab, and the legal powers of the English were few and uncertain. The Dutch sailor remained deaf to all entreaties. At last, the Chaplain hurried back alone, to lay his story before the Colonel.



The chaplain laid his hand on the dog's head.....

been in the sortie-party which captured the tomb of Georg Papalos, but denied entering the vault or taking the money. He repeated the story of having captured the sword of a French officer, and selling it to a Dutch sailor for a gold dollar.

Colonel Spleen listened with impatience, summarily rejected the prisoner's narrative, and sentenced him to death. He was to be shot in front of the whole garrison

At that time of night, Colonel Spleen was in the Assembly-Rooms of Fort St. George, far advanced in his cups. He greeted the Chaplain scoffingly, and listened to his tale with contempt. "Nonsense!" roared the Colonel. "The man is guilty. The sentence will be carried out."

"I will appeal to the Governor-in-Council!" cried the Reverend Meek.

(Continued on page 5)

THE TEASER SERIES NO. 1

Christmas in Calcutta

[Here is a story which his deliberately left incomplete. A question is asked at a particular stage in the story and the reader is expected to answer this question himself and verify his answer by turning to page 20. Much amusement can be derived if more than one guess is made, before turning to the answer—Ed.]

CALCUTTA was celebrating Christmas.

Now, beware, you boobs of Bombay and madmen of Madras and do not run away with conclusions. In Bombay, at Xmas-time, the budmashes get busy and start communal riots while the obliging police clear the traffic for peace-makers to come and make peace in their own wonderful way. In Madras, the Andhras from the Agency tracts and the sight-seers from the ceded districts, take advantage of the railway concessions, crowd the streets and tread on your corns at every corner. But in Calcutta, the queen of the cities, the true spirit of Christian charity reigns supreme during the end of the calendar year

The Viceroy camps there for the Christmas and throws parties every other day. Maharajas from all corners of the country rent Theatre road residences and ladle out largesse right and left in true oriental splendour. Marwari millionaires keep combing the city in search of needy men



.....bevy of
Girls.....

and missionary institutions. M. L. A's and M. L. C's, still tipsy from the champagne drunk on St. Andrew's Day, babble about the benefits of British Rule in Bengal. Chinamen sell opium openly in Toretta Bazaar. Councilors of the Calcutta Corporation stop quarrelling long enough to attend to the civic conveniences of the rate-payers. Even the Bengali Bhadrakol youths stop throwing bombs and give the C. I. D. a rest at Christmas. Kalighat or Kidderpore, Bow-bazaar or Bhowanipore, Chowringhee or Chittaranjan Avenue, everywhere peace and goodwill reign supreme.

I felt strange and stranded in the midst of all this magnanimity. The atmosphere was thick with almsgiving and the Haroun-al-Rashids of Baghdad-on-the-Hoogly were hunting for hungry recipients of their Christmas charity. I felt oppressed and went into the Zoo in order to feel at home. But even here, the Yuletide spirit prevailed. The Governor's wife had organized a charity bazaar on behalf of the S. P. C. A. and the Zoo gardens were full of large-hearted men and women falling over each other to do their duty to the dumb animals.

Tired and despondent, I came to rest in front of a decorated tent. A large crowd had collected there and I elbowed my way to the front. The entrance to the tent was screened and, seated just outside of it, I saw the most beautiful bevy of girls outside of a Hollywood chorus. They were all Europeans or Anglo-Indians and were dressed more to charm than to clothe their limbs.

On a near-by table a large tray of fresh roses was displayed. A huge signboard announced that, in return for a rupee contributed to charity, you could have a rose and a kiss from any of the beauties in the booth.

It struck me that this was charity in excelsis. The pretty young ladies, appeared to be well-placed in life and did not in the least look like the painted pests of Park Circus who promise you pleasures of the flesh in return for the contents of your pocket-book. It was certainly strange that these female carriers of the white man's burden in India, should condescend to offer kisses indiscriminately even in the cause of Christ.

The crowd shared my sentiments evidently; for few took advantage of the tempting offer at first. But the more they looked the more the craze caught on. Finally one bold bad man went near and paid his rupee. One of the beauty chorus smiled her thanks, took up a rose and took the man inside the tent. After a few seconds the man came out all smiles and Christmas cheer. The curious crowd mobbed him for news but the man merely lifted his laughing eyes to heaven in happy gratitude for the 25th of December. That started the exodus and the rupees started raining into the coffers of charity. Even pessimistic I, succumbed in the end. A bewitching damsel took me inside the tent with a rose in her hand.

Question: What happened inside the tent?

[Guess the answer to the above question and check if your guess is correct by turning to page 20 where the correct answer is printed.]

The Colonel and the Chaplain—(Continued from page 3)

"You cannot!" retorted the Colonel. "We are under martial law here within the Fort, and the man has been handed over to the military tribunal."

"But the man is innocent!" insisted the Chaplain. "It is my duty to make every effort to save him."

"Every effort, hey?" bawled the Colonel. "Well, we'll see, you white-livered devil-dodger. I'll pardon the man, on one condition."

"What is that?" said the Chaplain. "That, instead of the execution of Thomas Holt, you will baptise my dog as a good Christian, in the presence of the whole garrison."

The Rev. Meek went deathly pale and the assembled officers roared with laughter. At last the Chaplain spoke. "Very well," he said. "It shall be done."

At 8 a.m. the following morning, Thomas Holt was led in procession through the ranks of the Garrison, and at last tied to the execution-post outside St. George's Gate. The record of his crime was read out, and the Chaplain recited the burial-service in a quivering voice. At last, the firing-party of twelve convicted criminals was lined up, facing the execution-post. The gong in the Fort struck nine.

"Now, Mr. Meek, which is it to be?" mocked the Colonel.

"I will carry out the baptism," replied the Chaplain, in a low voice.

"Very well: untie the prisoner," ordered the Colonel.

An altar and a font were made ready. Amid dead silence, the Chaplain consecrated them to the use of God.

The Colonel's dog was led forward.

The Chaplain looked piteously at the Colonel. "Sir, I beg of you," he said. "This is sacrilege."

The Colonel, standing amidst a group of sniggering officers, was enjoying himself. "Carry out your bargain!" he cried contemptuously.

The Chaplain squared his shoulders, and faced the jeering group, while the soldiers watched in horrified silence.

The Chaplain laid his hand on the dog's head, looked the Colonel in the eyes, and uttered the first words of the baptismal service.

"Do you acknowledge this to be your lawful child?" he said.

The two thousand soldiers burst into a roar of dreadful laughter. They laughed and laughed, suddenly released from the awful tension of the last hour. The sergeants ran up and down, striking the soldiers with their pikes, but still the Homeric laughter continued. In sudden anxiety, the officers saw that discipline was lost. The ranks were swaying and breaking.

"Dismiss the parade!" shouted the Colonel.

Commands rang confusedly in the tumult. At last, grudgingly and raggedly, the companies were marched away. The Homeric laughter still rang across the Island.

"Shall I continue with the baptism?" said the Chaplain, gently.

"Curse you!" cried the Colonel, and stamped away.

The Chaplain was left alone with the man he had saved. The still unbaptised dog crept forward, and licked the hand of the Man of God.



'KEBI'

BUT for the fact that the University exams were on, I would have passed this interesting item on to you even last week. I didn't want to take any chances with our young men. It might turn out both ways.

We have heard of several ingenious devices adopted by ne'er-do-wells in Examination halls to obtain extraneous succour. I remember a student who sat next to a window, and as soon as the question paper was put in his hands, he made a copy of it and threw it out of the window to his friend, who answered it with the help of text-books and had the answers smuggled in *via* the attender, generally on the students' pay-roll. Then again there is the case of the Kumbakonam boy, who had the answers written on the back of betel leaves, and when the superintendent, smelling a rat, came up to him, quietly folded up the leaves and put them into his mouth, as if nothing at all had happened in this innocent world.

From these inventive geniuses to the discovery of the twenty-year-old Hungarian, Etienne Bribil, is a mere mincing step. Bribil claims to have found the secret of a ray, before which a marble statue becomes invisible to the eye—And don't say Wells didn't tell you. His prophecies have a curious knack of coming true. Bribil gave a demonstration of his invention to a member of the Fourth Estate in Budapest, who relates to the world how after the rays had played on the statue for some time it slowly 'disappeared'. But when he put his hand where the statue stood, he could feel it. Only after it had been put through another course of, 'ray treatment', did it get back its visibility, which is going one further than Wells. Bribil has promised a demonstration before experts shortly.

A 'copper' was tramping his weary beat late one night near the General Post Office at Carlsbad, the Bohemian spa. He beamed as he passed a young couple, in loving embrace, leaning against a letter-box attached to the

wall and gave them an encouraging nod. Visions of his own not unromantic youth flashed before his retina. Scarcely had Robert passed them, the couple seized the letter-box, which, was not fixed to the wall, and rushed it to a powerful car waiting round the corner and drove away. Bobby had interrupted them when they were detaching the box from the wall and their 'love-making' was merely a blind to ward off suspicion. On a later occasion, they were 'nabbed' by a surly policeman, who had strong views on cuddling in public. And so free board and lodging for some months.

A woman entered a hospital in Columbus, Ohio, (U. S. A.) and complained of pains in the stomach. An X-Ray examination and, later, an operation were ordered and here is what the operating surgeon discovered in her stomach:

- 3 spoon handles.
- 10 parts of bed springs about three inches long.
- 23 assorted nails, some of them about a couple of inches long.
- 3 safety pins.
- 4 hair pins.
- 1 piece of string a yard long, and many bits of metal.

Except for an infection of the stomach, the woman's condition was reported good. It clean beats me how she accumulated this miniature junk-shop. Could it be *Hatha Yoga*?

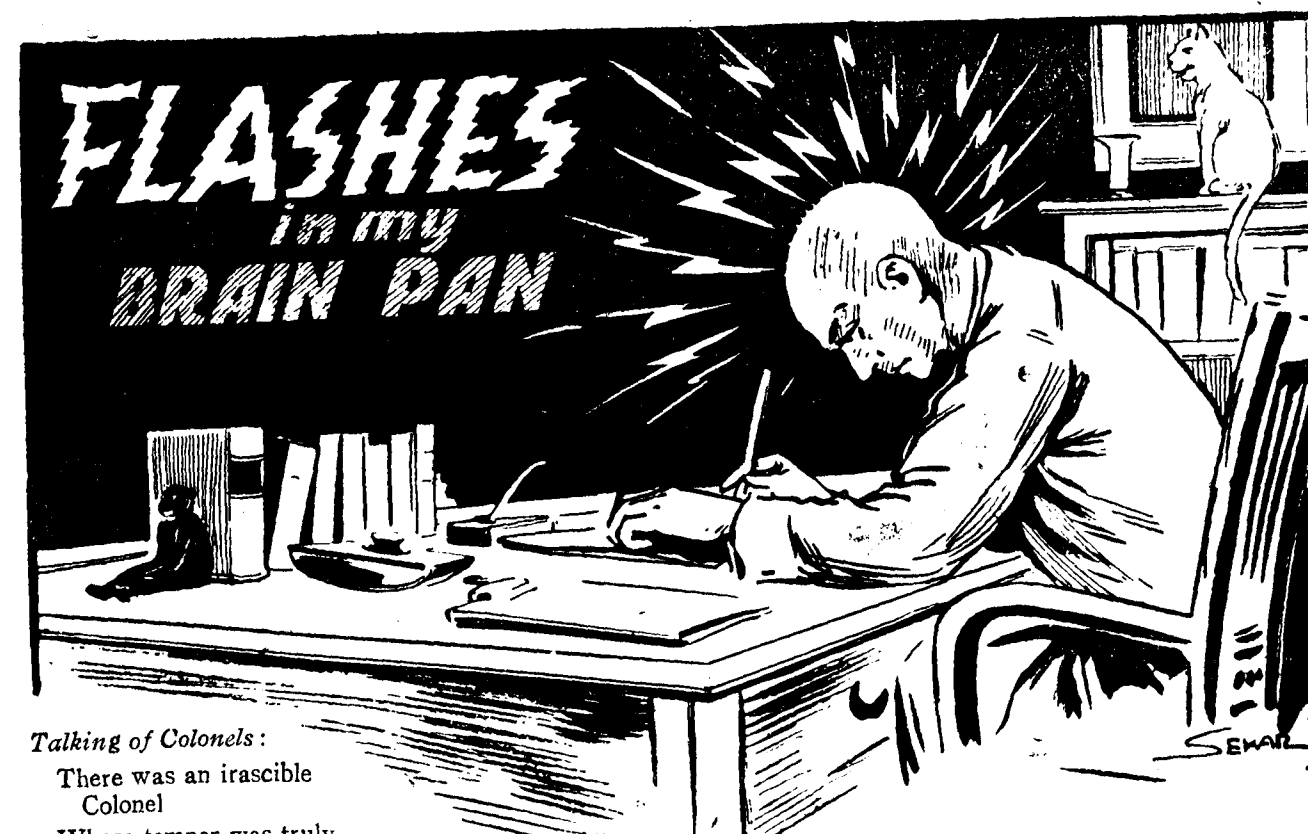
A small boy was leaving the school, with red, weeping eyes, when a kind-hearted lady accosted him.

"What is the matter, sonny?" queried the kind lady.

"Dyspepsia, rheumatism, asthma and appendicitis," was the startling reply.

"Oh, but you're so young. How can that be?" she exclaimed.

"It is quite true. I was punished because I couldn't spell them."



Talking of Colonels:

There was an irascible
Colonel

Whose temper was truly
infonelon;

Once he got carbuncles
And shot down his uncles
Both matolonel as well as patolonel.

Vegetable Vignette:

Tomatoes, says a doctor, facilitate speaking by their soothing action on the vocal chords.

When thrown from the audience, they definitely work the other way about.

Another:

What is the difference between a reviewer and a bird-fancier?

The former reads books, while the latter breeds rooks.

Limerick:

There was a young man called Murray
Who was awfully fond of Curray
He would swallow it hot
And believe it or not
Would send for some more in a hurray!

Our Reply:

Are fathers of large families good mathematicians?
asks one of our readers.

We should think so, from the way they *multiply*!

Remark:

And this modern music is so HOT, its very notes are melting.

Athletics:

'A well-known publisher is also a champion runner.'
We know many a book-maker who can outrun him.

Shades of Socrates!

I once knew a youthful chauffeur
Whose wife called him a lauffeur
And a thief and sneak;
But he sat silent and weak,
For the chauffeur was a philochauffeur.

That is Why:

Rats, says an eminent biologist, are wonderful architects.

We don't wonder. Aren't they always M. I. C. E. (Members of the Institute of Civil Engineers.)

Epitaph:

Let's a prayer say
For poor Jim Jolly;
He jumped out of the tram's way
But didn't see the trolley.

Caught:

He: I am sorry for being late darling. You see, I was detained at the office by the Head.

She (removing hair from his lapel): Umm. A blonde one, evidently.

Queries Answered Here:

How long can a man live without water, asks our Cora.

Well, till the case of whisky sent by his uncle as a X'mas present lasts.

Translated:

Teacher: Now Bobby, what do the letters F. R. A. behind the name of a great painter, mean?

Bobby: Please ma'am, they mean, the Fellow's a Real Artist.

THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

MY invitation to the readers to write to me has, I am glad to announce, produced gratifying results. Unlike the Home and Foreign Departments of the Government of India, which flatly refuse to take our representatives into their confidence on the plea of alleged administrative interests, there is no secrecy about me. The inrush of correspondence has been so great that I haven't had the time yet to sort-out and pigeon-hole the letters. Of this anon.

But a cursory glance at readers' letters has established one thing. Most of them have listed heavily for 'DEISVI'. I needs must fulfil readers' wishes. And 'Deisvi' you shall have to repletion. In the near future, it will be my privilege, to present in these pages, in serial form, a 'Deisvi' story of intense human interest.

It is amusing to see some of our fans still guessing at the sex of this talented writer. 'Deisvi' is not a coy maiden, but, to borrow an expression from America, a red-blooded, two-fisted, he-man, with a straight-from-the-shoulder talk. Fiction-writing in a super-imposed language is yet in its infancy in this country. The 'inevitability of gradualness', which, in a political sense, our rulers so glibly harp upon, has an apt application in the evolution of our literary forms. 'Deisvi's' artistry, however, is uncommon. A neat turning of a phrase, simple diction, smart dialogue, a happy blend of humour and pathos, severe avoidance of what Aldous Huxley calls vulgarity, a faithful reproduction of the realities of life,—these mark 'Deisvi' as one among the ones.

Speaking of evolution of literary forms, I should like to invite your attention to something new in these pages. In this issue on page 4 is appearing the first of the series of brain exercisers which I am calling 'TEASERS'. These are stories deliberately left incomplete just a stage before the climax. Readers are asked to guess the answer for a question or two and to compare their answers with the authors' answers appearing on a different page. This ought to be a diversion *par excellence*.

It is just a little over three years since the *Merry* started on its destined race. To-day it has fallen to my lot to write an obituary note. Elsewhere in this issue is printed a posthumous story entitled "Papa Dear" from the pen of S. Narasimhan, a young man, who, had he lived, would have distinguished himself as a writer of note. This story was entered for our Literary Competition conducted late last year. The distinguished panel of judges who judged this competition commended it highly. That the plot of the story should presage the coming tragedy, is one of the brutal ironies of life.

I and my assistants offer our sincere condolences to Narasimhan's family in their sad bereavement.

Your Editor.

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FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

The Thought Reader

After an immense amount of trouble, the vicar of a country parish succeeded in reconciling two old women who had been quarrelling for years. He even induced them to meet under the vicarage roof.

In his drawing room they shook hands. After an embarrassed silence one of them said:

"Well, Mrs. Tyler, I wish you all-you wishes me."

"An' who's saying nasty things now?" snapped Mrs. Tyler.

A Reasonable Answer

A tramp was arrested and taken to the police station.

"Come on," said the station sergeant, "strip yourself for a bath."

The tramp gazed at him unbelievably.

"What!" he exclaimed. "Me go into water?"

"Of course!" snapped the officer. "How long is it since you last had a bath?"

"Well," replied the tramp, with a puzzled frown, "I was never arrested before."

Hopeful

The cousins met at a Christmas party.

"I'm going to be married soon," said Jane. Her cousin looked surprised.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed in unlady-like tones, "how soon?"

"As soon as possible," replied the other coyly.

Quite Enough!

"How much d'ye charge to press a pair of trousers?" Sandy asked the proprietor of a Glasgow drycleaner's shop.

"A shilling is our charge," was the reply.

"All right," he said, after a while, "just press one leg for sixpence, and I'll have my photo taken side-view instead of front."

A Tight Fit

"Mummy, the trousers you made me are tighter than my skin," said the little one.

"Nonsense, my boy. Don't say silly things like that."

"But they are. I can bend in my skin and I can't in my trousers."

What A Find!

An English professor, after making a lot of experiments, reports that noise, no matter how intense, rarely disturbs the person who makes it.

His Claim.

Fay: "Swankey boasts that he has been in contact with Royalty? Has he?"

May: "Oh, yes. I believe on his holiday last summer he got stung by a queen bee."

The Sole of Kindness

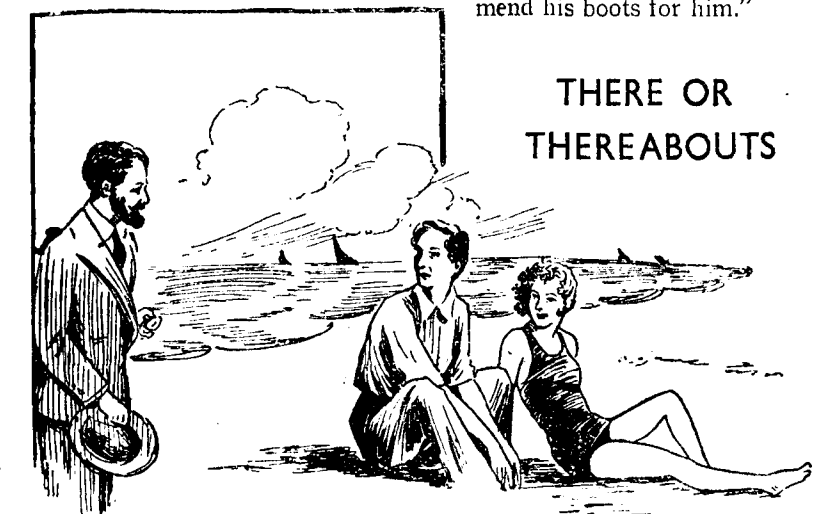
"The tale the landlord pitched when he came along for his rent would have melted the heart of a stone," said Mrs. Maggs to a friend. "He said as how his wife was sick in hospital, four of his kids were down with measles, and he wasn't too good himself. He reckoned he'd have to get rid of his car as he didn't have the cash to buy petrol now. He told me a lot more and he nearly had me in tears."

"Just look at me boots," he says. "Why, I can't even collect a bob to get them repaired."

"You poor man," I says, my heart full of sympathy for him. "Just wait a minute till I see what my husband can do for you."

Her friend nodded sympathetically. "I s'pose he gave him a few bobs ter go on with," she said.

Mrs. Maggs sniffed. "Not him! But he offered to mend his boots for him."



THERE OR THEREABOUTS

"Excuse me: Could you direct me to—er—the nearest nudists' colony?"

THE MENACE IN EUROPE

"Hatred is more durable than antipathy and the generating power of great changes is not so much insight as hysteria."

—Nazi Mysticism.

A bleak day in November. A huge procession marching on Berlin headed by two men. One tall, cool and supercilious. The other not so tall, with two, small bushy tufts of hair beneath his nose. The procession was Hitler's abortive *putsch* of 1923. The tall one was Ludendorff, the monarchist Junker. The other one was Hitler.

Some of the processionists carried arms. Some did not. Opposite the royal palace stood a detachment of the Reichwehr with Lieutenant Godin in command. Godin roared "Fire!"

Twenty Putschites dropped, dead or wounded. Ludendorff, the military big noise of war-time Germany walked with a cool insolence through the firing soldiers, unhurt. Hitler disappeared, too; but not so cavalierly as the other.

Father, a customs *unteroffizier*, mother, a woman of Bohemian origin, born at Braunau on the Austro-Bavarian frontier in 1889, Hitler has not much to make a song about his origin. That he is ashamed, unlike his Italian counterpart, of his humble beginnings is evident from his avoidance of reference to his early history. He inherits his prolixity from his mother, and her Slavic mysticism finds an echo in his hugging of mystic dogmas and esoteric symbols. Of part Bohemian origin, his Austro-Hungarian compatriots conceded to him and his kind but second-rate citizenship. This wrong to his ego was to find a violent expression later in his mad worship of the Nordic icon. His preference as a boy of the Reich hymn,—*'Deutschland, Deutschland uber Alles'* to the Austrian national anthem is characteristic of him—cussedness, irrational resistance to authority, a complex of negation.

At fourteen years of age he lost his father and at sixteen his mother. With just fifty *gulden* in his pocket and a knapsack over his shoulder, young Hitler entered Vienna to seek his fortune. He knocked in vain at the doors of the Vienna Academy of Arts. He smelt too much of the countryside, was too crude in his general make-up, to be received into that polished hierarchy. Disappointed, tramping, he finally landed a job as a builder's labourer. His job was to cart rubbish away.

The principle of Trade Unionism was already deeply ingrained in the Viennese artisan of that day, and for the first time, Hitler came across a political concept, the Marxist idea. He was repelled by it. The same



negative complexes that made him choose the German rather than the Austrian national anthem, were at work again. Thus for six years, Hitler spent his life, a common labourer, but not feeling one with his comrades, dreaming of himself as a Nordic pagan god, drinking in the leprous poison of Karl Lueger's anti-Semitic propaganda.

Two years before the war he left Vienna for the Bavarian Capital, Munich. Just why he did that may never be known. Was he rejected as unfit for military service in the Austrian army? Did they locate a kink in his brain? Whatever it was, he found himself on German soil, and when the War came he shouldered arms in the German Army.

During that unspeakable hell that marked the close of the Ypres offensive—the murderous whine of flying bullets, the incessant rat-tat-tat of machine-gun fire, shells erasing whole platoons and burying what little was left of them, in that infernal orgy of annihilation, Hitler could be seen whipping himself into an incandescent professional fury, using his bayonet to some account, which won him the iron cross.

That closes the second phase of Hitler's life.

The close of the War signalled the rise of Communism in Germany. But here in Bavaria reaction set in. Marx was shoved down from his eminence in people's estimation and Nietzsche veered round into vogue again.

We now find Hitler using his glib tongue in barrack rooms, and presently outside, disseminating his putrid credo of hate "*Deutschland erwache! Jude verrecke!*" Germany awake! Juda perish!

Germany was presented with a bill, the biggest yet in the history of Man. The victory-intoxicated allies who thrust the Versailles Treaty down the throat of vanquished Germany little thought that their mad greed would later on release just those bestial passions which

plunged them into a war that very nearly gobbled them up, and a repetition of which would ring down the curtain on Hellenic civilisation. They were not psychoanalysts. In a burst of post-war sanity they decided on unilateral disarmament and made a beginning with Germany, stripping her naked of her steel trappings, and spring-cleaning her skirts of all nasty specks of gunpowder. What they did to Germany they very thoughtfully forgot to do unto themselves. And there was Article 231 of the Treaty which dubbed Germany the villain of the show for all time. These three sores rankled, grew fat in the fulness of time, and finally burst distributing a noxious poison over the face of Europe.

There are the monarchists dreaming of the restoration of the recluse at Doorn and the Hohenzollern family. There are the industrial barons of Ruhr and Wurttemberg, the Krupps, the Stinnes interests, the Thyssens, not so keen on the Hohenzollern dynasty, but panicky at the onrush of Communism. There is the body politic used to the discipline of blood and iron of the Bismarckian type, fast growing restive under the inanities of the Weimar Constitution and the awful burden of Reparations. There are the Marxists with their pacific foreign policy and militant domestic propaganda, a bit too sure of themselves.

It was time the monarchists did something instead of looking fondly at Doorn; and the big business bosses something instead of searing themselves into jitters. These two groups, forgetting for a while their mutual hatreds, shook hands and cast their eyes around for a fuse.

Meanwhile Hitler joined the German Labour Party which was composed of just six members, with about eight Reichmarks representing the sum total of its party funds. Hitler was the seventh member. The parties' ideas about capitalism were deliberately nebulous. But it promised German labour just as much as the communists ever promised it. Hitler's magnetic voice, his indefinable something that marks a man from the crowd, so cheaply described as personality, was drawing adherents, swelling the party ranks. It grew from strength to strength, culminating in the *putsch* of November 1923. A brief spell in prison and Hitler was swept back into oblivion.

At this moment, talking through their hats, aided by the society woman who sadly missed the former imperial magnificence, the industrial barons and monarchist nobility lifted Hitler and shot him up as the people's tribune. Till finally we find him as the Chancellor of Germany towards the beginning of 1933.

The nobility had precious little in their pockets except their decorations. The industrial kings of Ruhr and Wurttemberg opened their money bags. Each told Hitler what his job was. The trick was done. Hitler spat lurid flames and breathed brimstone at the authors of the Fatherland's humiliation, snapped his fingers all round the frontiers, lashed himself and his followers into a white heat and broke up the ramifications of communism almost overnight. With a bravado that beat Braggadocio nowhere, he started rearming Germany, flouting the hated Treaty of Versailles.

The monarchists rubbed their hands in glee. They slapped Hitler's back pointing their thumbs at Doorn and

Potsdam. They got the shock of their lives. He bared his teeth at them, and asked them to go to hell or Doorn whichever they fancied. So that, for the time at least, the world definitely lost a chance of seeing the erstwhile pageantry of Imperial Germany reinstated at Potsdam.

Sometime in July 1933 Hitler was scheduled to address the Reichstag. Dark rumours of the trend of Hitler's speech outlining Germany's determination to repudiate the Versailles Treaty *in toto*, and to re-arm to pre-war level trickled beyond the frontiers. France rushed troops to the border. Poland mobilised her reserves. The world sat on pins. Was it sheer bravado? Or was some power backing up Hitler? People in the political green-rooms say that Russia is in the game. The idea looks like raving lunacy. But then politics is a filthy game. However, before Hitler delivered his advertised speech, President Roosevelt made a calm appeal from across the Atlantic enjoining Europe to keep a level head. If a hint was conveyed between the lines, it was certainly taken by Hitler, and his firebrand oration never came off. Instead he spoke a few delightful and sunny platitudes about peace and goodwill.

But trouble was brewing for Hitler. His lavish promises to Roehm and the monarchists were never fulfilled. They growled ominously behind their boss's back. Hitler stole wind from the Communist sails by dangling a juicy carrot before the proletarian donkey. He was a harassed man. On one side the nobility clamouring for the restoration of the monarchy, the industrial barons shying at the Communists; on the other, some of his followers, Marxists at heart, getting out of hand. Something had to be done about it.

Was it just coincidence that the Reichstag fire happened at this time? Or was it a craftily planned coup to shoot up the Nazi stock in the political stock exchange, and incidentally smite the monarchists and Communists on the face? Looking back over this affair through the clearing mists, one cannot but think that it was all a shade too goofy to be straight. All the communists accused in this arson banged the tribunal that tried them with cast-iron alibis. Van der Lubbe, on whom the crime was finally blamed off was just a grinning half-wit, if not a total looney. The German people, and with them the world, were frankly sceptic. The Reichstag fire was a fiasco. The whole show was too blatantly stage-managed to carry any credence.

Roehm and his brother monarchists were sore at the way Hitler let them down and Roehm, so the story goes, held staggering documentary evidence to queer the pitch for his master in this miserable affair. It is significant that immediately after the fire, Roehm 'retired' to Munich.

With Roehm, Ernest and Schleicher as the prime movers, that part of the Nazi brotherhood in overt and covert revolt bringing up the rear, a plot to end Hitler took shape. Their stumbling block was the Reichwehr which might poke its nose into affairs at the psychological moment. So these plotters decided wisely to cut the throats of the officers at General Head-Quarters as a preliminary to the *grandie finale*. There were women

(Continued on page 13)

If you ever happen to meet Percival Poggs, whatever else you may talk about, don't let the conversation turn to flies.

You can discuss politics, the weather or trade depression—anything you like, but for heaven's sake keep right off flies.

Now, it may seem strange to you that a man can be so touchy about so harmless an insect as a common fly, but take my word for it, Poggs hates flies.

Don't, for instance, start talking about modern aviation or trans-Atlantic flights for that might lead you to remark, "Amy flies well, doesn't she?"

And if Poggs does not begin to make funny faces, clench his teeth and glare at you at the mere mention of that horrible word, I'll eat my hat, though personally, I don't exactly relish a diet of pith.



POGGS AND THE FLY

By W. J. MURRAY

rather hastily. For Poggs is large and massive, and the consequences might be disastrous.

Let me 'give you the inside' as the Yankee says, on this Poggs business.

Poggs was a junior detective, who might have been one of the Big Five by now, had it not been for a fly.

There had been a lot of activity in the ranks of the city police force—and if you knew as much as I do about policemen, you'd agree that this was very unusual—all the

cops being nuts on 'getting' a certain 'bucket-shop bookie' named Slipi Fela. There weren't any flies on old Slipi as far as shifty business was concerned, and the Law knew it.

Heaps of times they'd tried to get the old Mussalman 'bookie', but he was too cute for them. The fellow somehow sensed danger in the nick of time, and had never accepted a marked coin or slip sent with the usual bogus punter.

Naturally, the police were rather keen on getting the old chap, and so they arranged, on a perfect day, the perfect raid with the perfect 'punter'. Poggs, fresh from home leave and new to Slipi, was to be the perfect punter.

Well, to cut a long story short, there was a deuce of a lot of preparation for the big raid on Slipi's den, and the Big Noises of the Law, with tons of other cops, hid themselves at the psychological moment, in a vacant house opposite.

Meanwhile, Poggs started for Slipi's place in the perfect Disguise with the marked coins and slip, and a load of optimism and good cheer, for the Chief had told him he'd sure get a rise and be given a fair chance to become another Sherlock if he planted Slipi O.K.

And it was arranged that after Poggs had placed the bet, he was simply to fiddle about with his nose a bit as if he wanted to sneeze badly, whereupon the rest of the party opposite, who could just see the head and shoulders of Poggs, were to butt in on old Slipi and do the needful.

This signal was agreed to be about the most unsuspicious-looking one any guy could think of, and since Poggs had suggested it himself, it would be another feather in his cap if he pulled the thing off.

Well, Poggs greeted Slipi with a sickly smile, and sidling up to the old chap, whispered in his left ear he'd come to lay an each way bet on 'Grease Lightning' in the 3-30. Slipi eyed him closely for a while, and then, deciding he was safe was about to ask Poggs for his bet and money, when a fly saved him from jail.

You see, Slipi had felt a bit peckish and had ordered some juicy sweetmeats, which were lying on the table at which he sat. Meanwhile, a couple of hundred flies—feeling hungry too, as is the habit of most bazaar flies—had settled on the eats and were thoroughly enjoying themselves when Poggs walked in.

Exactly what Poggs did in the sixty seconds he was persuading Slipi to take his bet, he never told anyone. He swears that the old chap was just going to take his cash and bet when it happened.

One of those darned flies, fed up to his hind legs with the greasy business of demolishing old Slipi's 'eats', decided a little stunting and high-altitude stuff would aid his digestion somewhat.

So he took off, and after a lot of preliminary banking, looping the loop, and falling-leaf stunts, began a fast 'all-out' spin from one end of the room to a spot just under Poggs' nose, where, using the gyro-stabiliser and helicopter part of his anatomy, he tried to park in one of Poggs' nostrils.

To give Poggs his due, he only did what any other mortal would have done under the circumstances. At the best of times, flies are a damned nuisance, but when they

start tickling a chap's nostrils, he simply can't help rubbing his nose a bit vigorously.

Poggs spent the next minute or so in rubbing and massaging his nasal organ as if he wanted to obliterate it, and hopping about the room as if he'd stood on a tack.

And away across in the other house, the Chief after telling his boys to beat it to old Slipi's place, chuckled to himself: "Good old Poggs, he's done it. Only he's being too damned realistic about the whole thing."

Meanwhile, old Slipi's place was full of more policemen than you've ever seen at the race-course. They jerked the old Mussalman to a corner of the room, and ransacked his place for the coin, whilst the Chief and the Other Four started to tell Poggs what a great guy he was, and what a great Force they were.

But when they started wrenching up the floor-boards, and asking old Slipi to open his mouth wide and say 'Ah', to see if he'd hidden the chit or swallowed the coin, Poggs had to tell them.

And what they told Poggs for the next few years, I leave you to figure out.

THE MENACE IN EUROPE—(Continued from page 11)

on this spree. And, womanlike, they talked. The hounds of Hitler smelt a rat. Days in advance Hitler got to know the details of the plot and he was ready. He rushed detachments of the Reichwehr and platoons of his loyal Black-guards to cover the G. H. Q. and commenced the rounding up of the grumblers. Roehm refused to budge from his retreat in Munich. Hitler personally superintended his apprehension. On that fateful day, June 30, 1934, about 300 of these unfortunates were lined up against the wall and Hitlerism wallowed in the luxury of a blood-bath unheard of in history. The world was told that only 77 were slaughtered. Nearly thrice that number crossed the border. Among those rounded up was Prince August Wilhelm. He was quietly released later. Hitler, enormous as his act was, was too frightened to spill purple blood. He might lose his job if he went too far. The most revolting part of this bloody horror was the torture and murder of Frau von Schleicher, who was believed to share with her husband and Roehm the secret of the Reichstag fire.

Just twenty five days later, on July 25th the Nazis parodied with wonderful precision American gangster technique in the murder of Dr. Dollfuss. There is no doubt as to the trans-frontier Nazi responsibility for this ghastly crime.

Hitler's persecution of the Jews is so dastardly that imagination reels at it. The gory pages of history pale with shame at this 20th century atrocity. A tenth-rate economist, Hitler believes, as only a fanatic can believe, that national solidarity and well-being depends, not on an

equitably planned economy, but on 'racial purity'! This from a man in whom runs the virus of cross-blood! His utterances, his claims, are so extraordinary that it is an amusing pastime to speculate where lunacy ends and humour begins. The elusive laws of psychology cannot explain away the fascination with which Hitler is hypnotising Germany, as Rasputin did Russia and its reigning family.

Here stands Hitler, Goebbels on his left, Goering on his right, the 'First Gentleman' in the Fatherland. Is he the tribune that will lead Germany to an economic rebirth and new heights of cultural attainment? No. He stinks too much of the cave and the jungle to do either. Though the world outside knows little, forces are taking shape in Germany that are not good for the Reichfuhrer's health.

What is the future of Nazism? Whence this funny-looking but awful man, posing ridiculously with his left hand clutching his stomach, munching dynamite and breathing vitriol? It is significant that Hitler is keeping, with steam up, a retreat in the southern mountains, from which delightful place anybody can slip, over the frontier in a few minutes. It is still more significant that recently two Italian banks received fat deposits from Germany, accessible any time a call is made.

Now that he has kicked the ladder from under him, will he disappear in a dark cloud of smoke as the unholy ghost of post-war Europe? History holds the answer.

LETTER TO A NEPHEW

No 2.

MY DEAR SEENU,

I am glad to hear that you wish to be an all-round astrologer. All luck to you! May all afflicted souls come to you for the solace of your visions!

There is a little preliminary work to be done now. I may compare this preliminary work to the digging you do, before you lay the foundation stone of a building. Before I say anything further, let me utter a warning. Never for a moment imagine that all astrologers are like you and me. They may be steeped in the science for all we know or care. What I am going to say now applies only to a person like you who wants to be an astrologer without knowing Astrology. The methods I suggest are all my own; and I found them extraordinarily profitable when I was in the business myself some years ago. Now let me proceed to business. First you will have to decide on a name. My advice would be, don't call your business by one of these new-fangled names coined after politicians or political events. What I mean is, you see, some people name their business after Jawaharlal or Motilal or some great incident like the Dandi March. Jawaharlal and Motilal are very great people no doubt, but to call your business 'Jawaharlal Astrological Bureau' or yourself a 'Dandi March Astrologer', seems to me a very crude form of exploiting a great name. It is as bad as naming some tooth powder or tobacco after some great historical figure. Imagine 'Sivaji Snuff' or 'Akbar Tooth Powder' or 'Buddha Match Sticks' and see how bad it looks! And again, don't try Raja, Great Indian, Excelsior, A.B.C., or things of that type. Leave alone these high-sounding, godless nomenclatures. I am solidly for calling your business after your grandfather's name—'Mathru Bhootam Jyothishalaya', I think, would be ideal. For ordinary purposes you can abbreviate it to 'M. B. Jyothishalaya'. You probably feel like calling it 'Home' or 'Bureau' but, they appear too fashionable to my taste, and may even keep off some possible clients from the orthodox section.

Next, you must get a sign-board. I know, if left to yourself, you will not hesitate to announce your business to the public with a charcoal scrawl on the wall. But I warn you not to do it. Appearance counts. A good sign-board may cost five rupees. If you want, I shall lend you the amount (without interest of course). I was less fortunate than you are when I started in my profession. I had no kindly uncle as you have. My uncle had pots of money but when I asked him for about four rupees to get a sign-board done, he demanded a promissory note from me for the amount and said he

would give only two rupees nine annas, deducting the interest in advance. Of course I rejected the money. How then did I get the board written! I sat on the river bank, thought over it, and found a solution. There was a lawyer in our street who had ceased to think of the Law Court and Judges. He had a wooden board hanging in front of his house, and weather and time had erased all the lettering on the board. I went there at mid-night and pulled it out of the wall. It was more useful to me than to him, and neither he nor any litigants were likely to miss the board. My uncle used to depend upon me for getting him fruits, snuff etc., from the shop; and some months of such service had enabled me to put by a few annas, with which I bought a little Japan and white paint and wrote my own sign-board. It was the best sign-board in the whole town, and I owe at least half my success in business to the attractive appearance it presented. When I retired I gave it to a carpenter, had it planed, and got a nice little wooden box made of it. I presented the box to a doctor, who came every day and nursed my little boy through a bad attack of typhoid.

Don't think I am merely rambling. I am no doubt likely to forget the dinner under my nose if I am started on my reminiscences, but the above piece of personal history is definitely given with a view to indicating to you a moral

Get the best sign-board painter to work for you, and get the most handsome board done, and hang it over your front door on an auspicious day, quietly. The whole town will know it before the evening. You must steel yourself against a little jeering that you may get from your friends and acquaintances. If you learn to treat them with aloofness and disdain, they will be all right soon and will begin to take you for granted as easily as they do their postman.

After the board, comes the letter-paper. Please go to Mr. Dandapani of Sridevi Printing Works, and tell him whose nephew you are, and he will do his best for you. By the way, it is possible that he may remember a small amount that I owe him. If he asks you about it, please tell him that I must have forgotten the due, and that you will surely write to me and get him the money. Now select some large-sized note paper, about 500 sheets. Don't, have them all in one colour: 300 in light red, about 100 in green, and about 100 in deep yellow, I think, will do for the present. Get the letter-head printed in the following form:—

PROPRIETOR:—

Brahmasri W. W. SRINIVASA

DIKSHITHAR, Medalist

Future Foretold

Horoscopes Corrected, Cast. Haunted Houses Purified

Palm Lines Studied

Purification Undertaken

Planets Placated

Incurable Diseases Cured

Black Magic Foiled etc., etc.

Your affectionate
UNCLE.

Wedding by Post

LOUNGING lazily in his easy chair, Mr. Babu Lal, I.C.S., wondered.

After an intoxicating social life amongst the brilliant throngs in far off England, he felt rather bored and dull here—in an up-country Indian town. His work was easy; sports second-class; friends few; entertainments rare and those going, simple!

What to do to escape this eternal boredom?

All in a flash, a great idea flashed through his mind and Mr. Babu Lal, I.C.S., almost jumped up in his chair!

A man of action every inch of him, he lost no time in turning thought into action.

The next day's *Tom-Tom* blazed forth the following advertisement in its matrimonial columns:

Wanted a beautiful grown-up virgin of fair complexion and high connections; caste no matter, to marry a handsome, young I.C.S. officer. Apply with photo to Ad. Box. 15 c/o The Tom-Tom.

A fortnight later, Mr. Babu Lal, I.C.S., was sorting and selecting and blue-pencilling heaps of photos and relative literature.

"An Angel!" exclaimed Mr. Babu Lal at first sight of the photo of the Zamindar's daughter. Taking it up with reverential fingers, he gazed long and longingly into those dark and languorous eyes on bromide paper.

Headstrong and impulsive, he started negotiations through the post, settled all details and fixed up the marriage to take place in a week's time.

The first hitch in his perfectly planned arrangements occurred when an unsympathetic Government refused to grant him leave for more than a day!

But Mr. Babu Lal was not a man to be easily daunted! His spirits simply refused to be damped! He would motor to his father-in-law's on the very morning of the auspicious day. The Zamindar would look to the rest of the arrangements. He lit a cigarette, and through the smoke consigned the Government to smoky regions.

Everything passed off smoothly and nicely to the entire satisfaction of Mr. Babu Lal, I.C.S. He was hitched according to schedule!

Soaring to the seventh heaven of halcyon joy and supreme bliss, facing a battery of cameras, Mr. Babu Lal drove home with his wife beside him.

That little journey from his father-in-law's was going to be his brief—though enchantingly beautiful—honeymoon trip!

Half way through, he found his voice, and addressed her.

"Dear!"

"Um!"

"How do you find it all?"

"Um!"

"You are happy?"

"Um! E—E—Um!"

"You aren't afraid—and shy—and—all that?"

"Um—Um!"

"Dear, do speak to me won't you? I long so much to hear your voice!"

She burst into sobs!

Light dawned upon poor Mr. Babu Lal's agonised soul—too late!

A thorough sportsman, he resigned himself to his fate and gently soothed her!

He was wedded to a dumb though extremely beautiful girl!

Lucky Man!—*Editor.*

In The Next Issue

NEMESIS

By 'Embusque'

(Retribution coming to a Pirate Captain)

LOVE'S LABOURS

NOT LOST Part I

By V. B. Prasad

(In a spirit of bravado a man dares to beard a lion in its cage for the sake of his lady love.....)

EUGENE

By 'Jason'

(The romantic and brighter side of low life in a city)

LOVE AND A CAN OPENER By J. H. Acott

(Love in a Tennis Court)

WIFE TAKES UP PHOTOGRAPHY By 'Dhalo'

(The husband teaches her and everything ends in a mess.)

THE MAN ON THE FOOT-BOARD

Teaser No. II

(Who was he?)

PRIVATE JOYFULL on A Morning's Drill.

Shows

Star ratings in Britain as compared with the United States according to Box Office receipts for the past 12 months reveal that the most popular Hollywood stars outside the U. S. market are: Eddie Cantor, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Norma Shearer, Janet Gaynor, George Arliss, Paul Muni, Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert, Ronald Colman, in that order. Edward G. Robinson is quoted as being particularly a strong draw in the British Isles—a statement that is at variance with the views of most of the exhibitors. Ann Harding means practically nothing in England.

The Studios Rank Their Own Stars

Norma Shearer wins the box-office stakes at M.G.M. Mrs. Thalberg is followed by Wallace Beery, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable and William Powell. Greta Garbo, a prestige rather than a ticket-window star, fills the fifth place.

At Paramount, Mae West, of course, heads the parade, followed by Bing Crosby, Gary Cooper, George Raft, Claudette Colbert and W. C. Fields, the last of whom has since earned promotion. Mae West, it is revealed, "didn't bring home so much bacon to the Company as she did the year before."

Hollywood opinion is that she must get away from her present type of picture.

Academy Awards for 1934

Actor: Clark Gable, "It Happened One Night," Columbia.

Actress: Claudette Colbert, "It Happened One Night," Columbia.

Direction: Frank Capra, "It Happened One Night," Columbia.

Outstanding Production: "It Happened One Night," Columbia.

Adaptation: Robert Riskin for "It Happened One Night," Columbia.

Original: Arthur Caesar for "Manhattan Melodrama," M.G.M.

Scoring: Lou Silvers for "One Night of Love," Columbia.

Sound Recording: John Libadary for "One Night of Love," Columbia.

Song: "The Continental" by Con Conrad and Herb Magidson, in "The Gay Divorcee," Radio.



STAR DUST

Art Direction: Cedric Gibbons and Fred Hope, for "The Merry Widow," M.G.M.

Cinematography: Victor Milner for "Cleopatra," Paramount.

Assistant Director: John Waters, for "Viva Villa," M.G.M.

Cartoon: "The Tortoise and the Hare," Walt Disney.

Comedy: "La Cucaracha," Pioneer-Radio.

Novelty: "City of Wax," Stacy and Horace Woodward, Educational-Fox.

For the best individual contribution to the industry: Shirley Temple.

A Hollywood journal has the last word on screen's best dressed women as follows:—

The Best Dressed:—

Honey: Jean Harlow, All Woman: Mae West, Blonde Exotic: Carole Lombard, Ritzy Dame: Constance Bennett, American Gal:

Joan Crawford, Date: Mary Carlisle, Eternal Woman: Marlene Dietrich, Lady In a Bath Tub: Claudette Colbert, *Femme Fatale:* Greta Garbo, Magpie: Billie Burke, English Import: Merle Oberon, Singing Baby Doll: Alice Faye.

The Women-Haters

Do you know there was a Club in Hollywood composed of very brilliant film actors who called themselves 'Women-haters'? And that in the heart of a city devoted entirely to worshipping at the shrines of feminine film deities? There was one and it had such celebrities as Richard Barthelmess, Lew Cody, Charles Lane, William Powell and, strangely enough, Ronald Colman.

Each of these had burst forth from an unhappy, unsuccessful marriage. These guys styled themselves as 'Women Haters' and made many, many vows 'Never Again!'

They all went ahead and prospered and built new and finer homes and their rooms were sacred just to themselves. Each of them had his name inscribed on his door and 'Women Haters' at the portal. One by one, they forsook their vows. Each, in turn, fell for some girl and married. Lew Cody died. William Powell got Carole Lombard, Richard Barthelmess has a Mrs. and the citadel of the last surviving member of the club, Ronald Colman, is now being stormed. Rumours are rife, Cupid has been playing with the heart-strings of Ronald Colman and Loretta Young. This is quite likely to have a wedding-bell sequel.

THE LETTERS OF PRIVATE JOYFULL

44. THE FACTS OF NATURE

Madras, 13th April, 1935.

DEAR MOTHER,

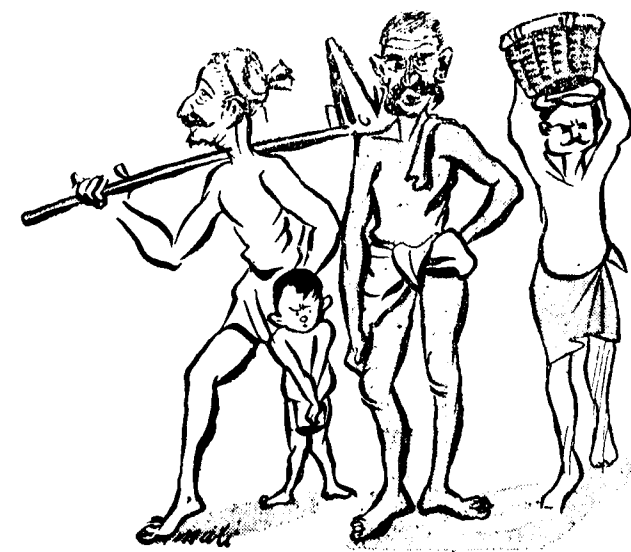
IT is quite romantic to think how everyone lives close to Nature out here. When people at home talk about getting close to Nature, they usually mean that they are fond of taking off their clothes. In some cases they drape themselves with a bit of muslin and assume classical poses amidst the bosky woodlands; others dispense with the muslin.

We have tamed Nature in our rather bleak island in the North Sea, and when we want to bring Nature back, we have to make special arrangements. The Naturists must first of all buy a piece of land and plant trees; dig a lake, supply nesting-materials for birds, and so on. The next precaution is to build a fence twelve feet high, to keep out low persons who are not interested in Nature, but who like gazing at uncovered females. Unfortunately Great Britain is a hilly little island, and when the fence is built, the low persons simply raise themselves to a neighbouring eminence and employ binoculars.

Out here it is quite different. The warm climate and fertile soil cause Nature to break out all over the place, and the people accept its facts with indifference. Even human beings are not exempt. Everybody starts being prolific as soon as possible, and no one bothers about the results. The consequence is that Indians are not interested in Nature in the same way as we are; they are surrounded by it all the while.

The ordinary people do not take off their clothes as a pleasure: they haven't much to take off. In fact, if they want to enjoy themselves, they put on some clothes.

.....they haven't much of clothes to take off



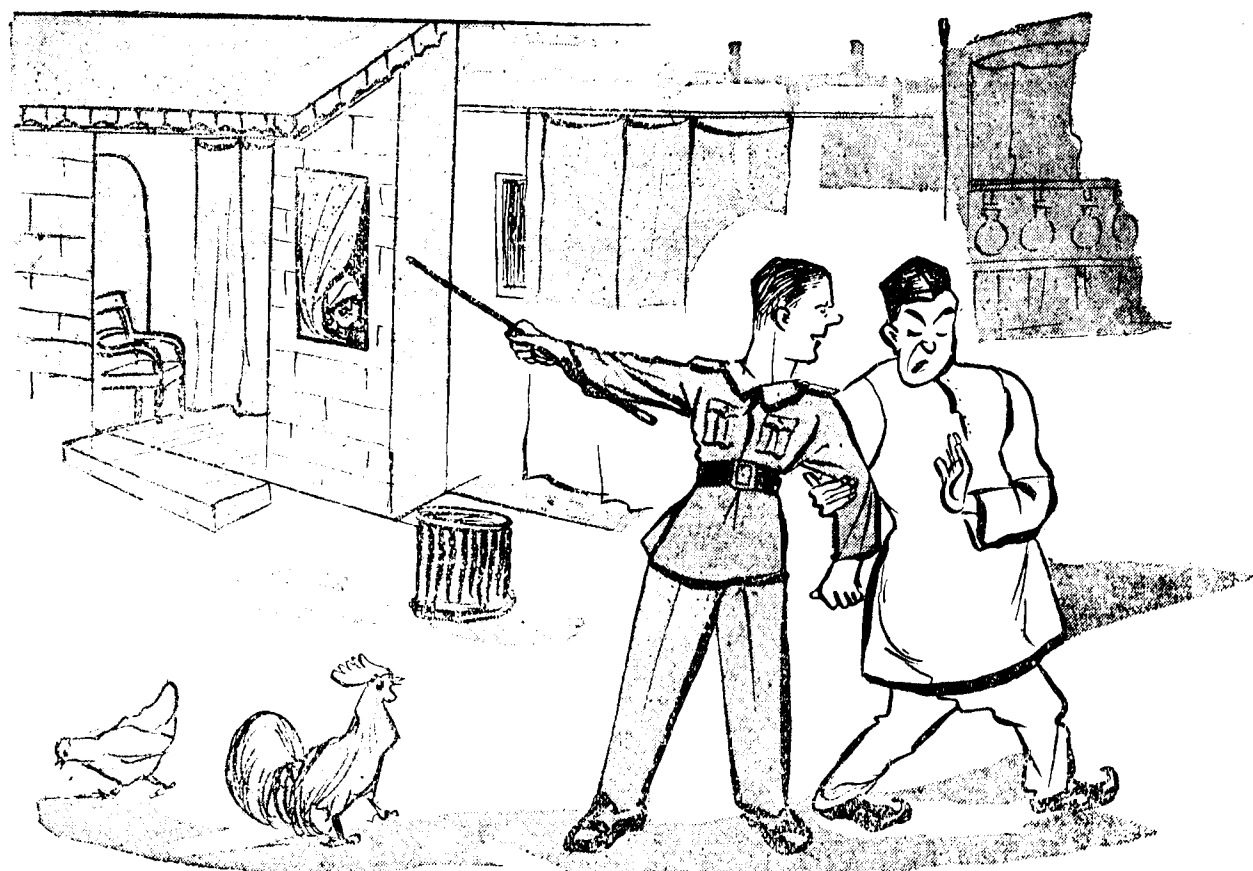
They keep these clothes in tin boxes made out of kerosene oil cans and wear them when they are happy. At festivals they dress up as tigers and other well-clothed beasts, and any part that still remains uncovered is decorated with paint.

There are other reasons, too. If you walked down Piccadilly wearing a pocket-handkerchief twisted round your loins, someone would call out the fire-brigade and the riot-squad, and march you off to jail surrounded by a protective screen of embarrassed policemen. But here, anyone can walk the palatial streets wearing something like a British workman's red pocket-handkerchief, and not be noticed. If someone does notice, you can say indignantly that your costume is dictated by religious principles; and that, as everyone knows, is a perfect alibi. It is a perfect alibi for most things even in England; but not for nudity in Piccadilly.

Out here there is a class of very holy men called Gymnosophists, which is a Greek word meaning the high philosophy of nakedness. These gentlemen simply wear a coat of ashes, and are greatly admired. Strangely enough, some of the nudists in England call themselves Gymnosophists too, because they take off their clothes for high spiritual reasons. Other nudists disrobe only for the good of their health, or for physical exercises, or to lose their complexes, or simply because they like it.

A very striking difference is that the nudists at home are mostly women, whereas in India they are always men. This seems strange, because women have the greater need to cultivate modesty and self-possession. There can hardly be a more modest place than a nudist colony; in fact, people complain that such places are too puritanical. You can understand this. A man and a woman feel foolish if they harbour any immoral designs on each other when they are both in a state of nudity. When making such proposals you need the concealment of clothes and the convenient deceptions of ordinary life. So it is practically impossible to cultivate immorality in a nudist camp. Immoral people can only enjoy nudism when they are outside the fence with a pair of field-glasses: inside, they find to their disgust that they feel like well-behaved members of a Sunday-school party. Therefore, nudism is a good cure for anyone with doubts about his morals, or for anyone who suffers from immodest thoughts or a shame-stricken mind.

In India it is the custom to apply an opposite form of treatment. Uneducated women feel shame even when they have no cause, and if a woman has cause to feel shame, she loads herself with more clothes than ever. I remember going on a visit one week-end to another town, and my companion and I happened to walk down a particular street. It was a quiet sort of street, with few passers-by. There were a lot of little rooms



I wanted to stop and explain.....but my friend drew me hastily onwards.

opening into the street, and in each room there was a chair just inside the doorway, with a lady sitting on each chair. The first lady I noticed was buried in clothes. She was just a big bundle of rich-coloured wrappings and heavy skirts, with her head poking out at the top. Besides the clothes, she was covered all over with heavy jewels. There were great lumps of gold and silver even in her nose and ears and on her forehead, and the small remaining portion of her face was thickly covered with cosmetics, so that you could say that not an inch of her entire person was actually exposed to view.

I asked my friend who these ladies were, and he looked disconcerted, and at last said they were actresses. I wanted to know why they were wearing all their professional make-up, and he replied that it was the custom. I asked if they got large fees for each performance, and he said, "sometimes". I said I supposed they were honoured, and went into society and dined with the Governor; but he said no, they were despised.

I was sorry to hear this, and wanted to know how anyone could despise honourable and cultivated women who practised a noble art; but he said that in India actresses are shameful. So I came to the conclusion that when a woman is shameful, she wears a lot of clothes.

The ladies seemed quite friendly, and they all greeted us in some way. One asked if I would like some beer. I was astonished that she kept free beer in her house, and thought this was very generous and hospitable.

I wanted to stop and explain that, although I did not drink beer, I much appreciated the kind thought; but my friend drew me hastily onwards. Another lady invited me to inspect her house, and out of politeness I was about to accept, when my friend told me not to go into so shameful a place.

I demanded to know how it could be shameful for an honest man to go anywhere, and he said it was a house of shame. I asked how the shame got into the house: was it there from the beginning, or had the men brought it? My companion seemed a bit annoyed, but anyhow he admitted that the men had brought the shame to the woman. So I said the men should feel ashamed, and not the woman.

My friend said that the woman was a necessary evil, and was ignored by decent people. I retorted that anything that was a necessity should be raised up, and not made evil. Also it was not right for decent people to ignore anything which they claimed was a necessity. Anyhow, it was not right to degrade a human being on the ground that she was a deplorable necessity.

Meanwhile, we were passing out of the street, and the lady waved good-bye to me, so I saluted her and wished her good luck. All the other inhabitants of the street were peering out of their doorways, and they laughed and waved their hands, so I respectfully saluted them, too. My friend was quite angry, and walked on with a very red face.

On thinking this over, I decided that these arrangements were due to the fact that the Indians are familiar with Nature. They cover their actresses from head to foot, and despise them. This is a pity, because as long as they do that, they will never get any good actresses. They expect their actresses to be shameful, whereas we expect the opposite, and will not go and see a play if we hear that the leading actress is of a bad character. What people expect of each other has a great effect on national life. If you expect women to be free and self-respecting, they mostly become so. Therefore, although we are charged with hypocrisy because we expect too much virtue in our neighbours, it is really good for the national character.

Some sections of society out here do not seem to understand that films are only make-believe, and are not a reflection of life. We like to see unusual things on the screen, not the everyday way in which we live. We also enjoy all sorts of shocking things, that would make us very indignant if they happened in real life; but on the films we only laugh at them.

People at home make the same mistake about films depicting Indian life. According to the films, India is full of wicked rajahs, naughty dancing girls, mysterious magicians, and blood-thirsty outlaws. The dancing girls walk about the bazaar with practically no clothes on and are always in the power of crafty priests who pass their time in holding human sacrifices. If someone made a film showing an Indian gentleman going to the office with an umbrella in his hand, and meekly checking accounts all day, no one would go to see it.

I was telling you how India is overwhelmed with Nature. Even the birds and small animals come and nest in your house, and at first it seems quite a disorderly state of affairs. The little birds especially are very

persistent. As soon as the nesting-season begins, they keep on flying in and out, building untidy nests in the rafters. This puts you in a dilemma. You do not want to upset their family-life, yet they do not seem to know that the proper place for nests is in trees. The birds in England are much better-trained, and always use the boxes and cocoanut-shells which you put outside for them, safely raised on a long pole.

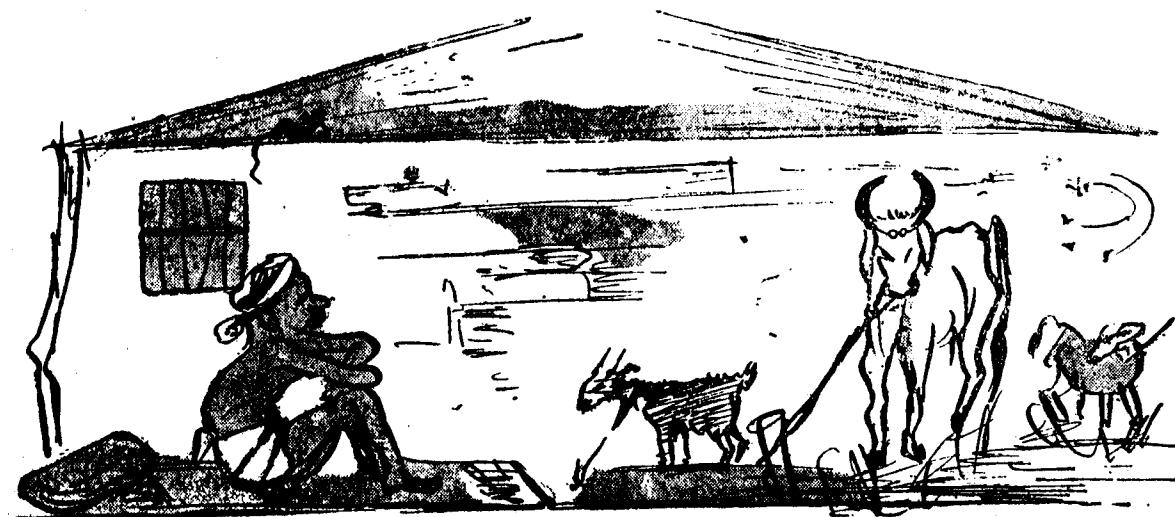
Anyhow, if you let the birds nest in the rafters, it means that you have to suffer the bounties which they shower from above; and they are always scattering twigs and bits of fluff about the place. You have to keep on opening and shutting the door for the parents, especially when they are busy feeding their brood. The only thing to do is to get a long stick and cruelly dislodge the nest as fast as it is made.

Once, we hung half a cocoanut outside, to encourage the birds to live out there, but this scheme does not work in India. The big birds steal all the kernel, and attack the little birds, so the latter continue to live inside.

I was surprised to find that some farmers let their cattle live in the house with them, like the people do in Ireland. Out in Appu's village, everyone goes indoors at night, for fear of thieves. There is only one long room in Appu's house, and one end is taken up by the cows, and the central portion by the other domestic animals. The family just have one small corner for themselves.

It is therefore understandable that the people are so used to the facts of nature, that they take no notice of them.

Your Loving Son,
OBEAH JOYFULL.



.....one end is taken up by the cows.....The family just have one corner for themselves.

Privileges of the Poor

By 'Tirumalai Nallan'

THE socialist and his not-so-socialist friend were proceeding to the offices of the Co-op. Society in the sweltering heat of the mid-summer noon. There was an umbrella over their heads.

"Ouf!" said the socialist. "What a heat! The idle rich are now lolling on their sofas with their glasses of iced lemon-squash, and we out in this heat!"

"But for that matter," said the other, "there may be now many of the idle poor too resting inside their mud-huts which, by the way, are cooler than the brick-houses of the well-to-do."

"But they are far and few between. And look at that labourer going about without even an umbrella," said the socialist.

"But then," replied his friend, "he wears a turban, which we do not. Besides, he is not encumbered with a shirt."

The socialist looked at his own shirt which was already wet.

"It is not out of choice he is not wearing a shirt," he retorted.

They were now passing a rich man's house. There was a boy on the verandah pulling a *punkha*. The door of the room in which the *punkha* was swinging was closed.

"There," said the socialist, "what do you say to that? This miserable wretch, probably gets Rs. 3 a month; and here in the hot verandah he sits the entire day, monotonously tugging at that rope. If the boy has got used to the heat, he won't get sunstroke. But the monotonous labour must turn his head. In yonder room lolls probably a lazy 'dog' with a thousand a month, trying to sleep or chewing pan."

Scarcely had the orator ceased when a resounding crash was heard from within the room. Somebody was screaming with pain.

The socialist, animated by curiosity to know what had happened to the lazy 'dog' inside, ran to the house followed by his friend. They opened the door and found

the heavy *punkha* fallen on the floor and a fat man smarting with a bleeding injury on his head. The entire household had gathered round.

The socialist and his friend left the house a few minutes later and resumed their journey to the offices of the Co-operative Society.

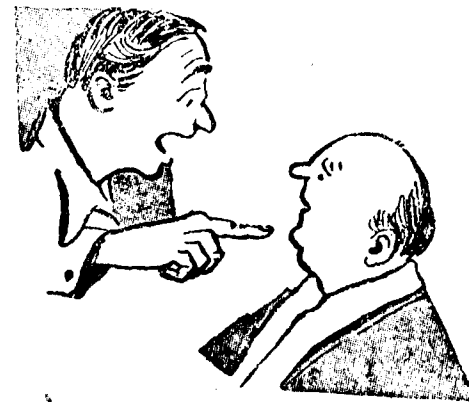
The not-so-socialist seemed thoughtful for a minute and then said, "The poor have their privileges."

ANSWER to TEASER:

The girl kissed the rose
and handed it over to me.

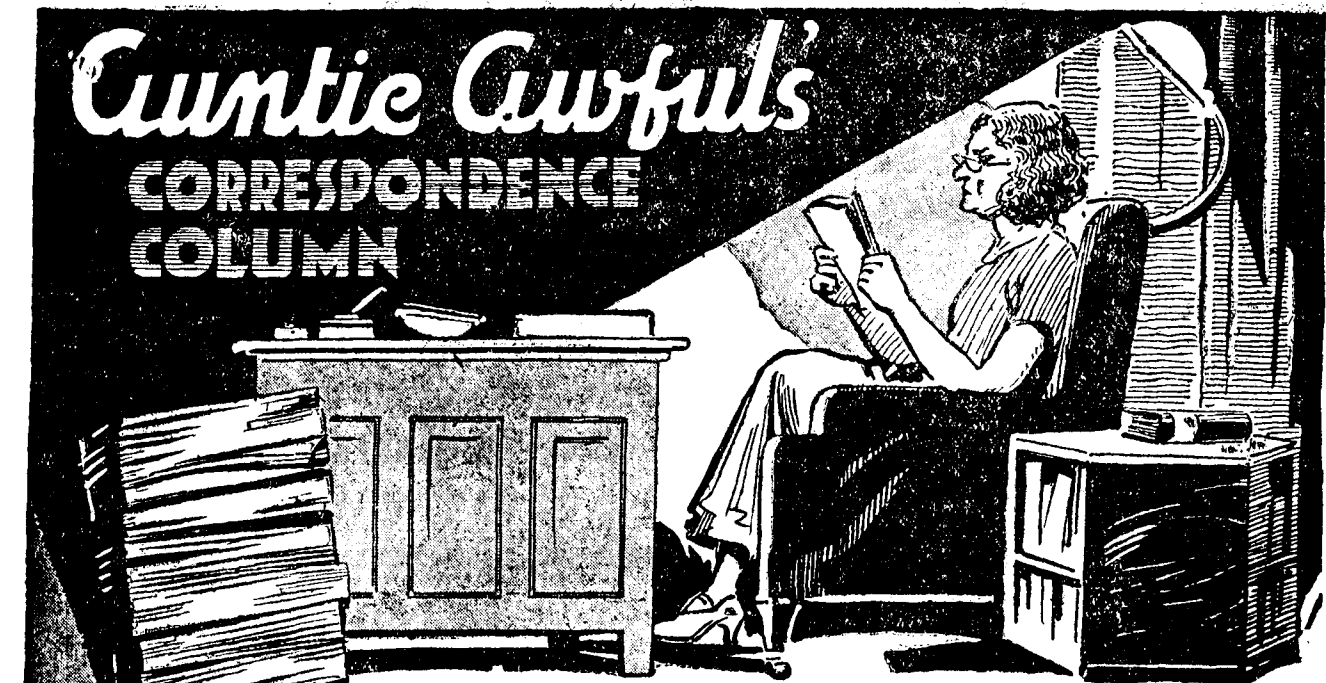
For the teaser see page 4.

DO YOU KNOW?



Please see answers on page 24.

1. What is Chauvinism?
2. Who is called the modern Methuselah?
3. What is a Jeremiad?
4. Who is a 'poltergeist'?
5. What is meant by 'to cross the Rubicon'?
6. What is meant by the 'kangaroo' system in parliamentary procedure?



XXIV

A niece has written saying that she would like to hear something of Auntie's other relatives, besides Uncle Ghastly. Well, my dears, I think I have told you that Uncle Ghastly is not really a relative; he is simply something that the cat brought in. He is supposed to be Auntie's legal adviser, but Auntie suspects that he got his degree from one of those American correspondence colleges.

Perhaps, chickabiddies, you would like to hear about Auntie's elder brother, Archibald Awful. Archie was a piccolo-player in a brass band. You know what a piccolo is, my dears? It is a kind of little flute or wooden whistle, about the size of a fountain-pen, and it plays the quick, chirpy parts of the melody. Piccolo-players are always very big men, and it is quite amusing to see them puff out their cheeks and waggle their fingers very fast, when all that comes forth is a tiny piping tune. However, you must not imagine that the piccolo-player is unimportant. Archie says that his contribution provides an artistic touch to an otherwise undistinguished symphony.

Archie is always complaining that he is unlucky. He belongs to a prize band, and once upon a time the band was commanded to give a performance before the Emperor of Boloney. His Bolonian Majesty was delighted, and ordered that all the musicians must have their instruments filled with gold. The player of the big drum became a millionaire, while the performers on the double-brass and the euphonium retired with handsome fortunes. Archie was unlucky. He played the piccolo.

The band went on a tour round the world, and arrived in the dominions of the Bashaw of Cumshaw. The Bashaw entertained the band at the palace, and presently commanded a concert. Unfortunately, the Bashaw was accustomed only to Oriental music. The cacophonies of Archie's prize band nearly split his ear-drums. In a rage, he ordered that all the bandsmen were to have their instruments thrust down their throats.

The executioners started with the man who played the big drum, and after half-an-hour they had to confess that the task was beyond them. They enjoyed no better success with the double-bass, the euphonium, and even the trombone. At last they came to Archie. He was unlucky. Archie played the piccolo.

And now, whenever Archie starts to speak, he goes "Pheep! Pheep!"

Timon (Arawalli). Here are the definitions you want, dear boy. When a man has more than one wife, that is Polygamy. When a wife has more than one husband, that is Polyandry. And when man and wife have only each other, that is Monotony.

Intrepid (Hoogly). "What ought an intrepid man to do when he finds his house attacked by robbers?" Well, dear sir, if you go sneaking out of the front door, the robbers will only think you are afraid of them. The best thing for an intrepid man to do is to walk boldly out of the back window.

Mina Mo (Tirur). "A few weeks ago you were talking about different inventions. In my opinion, electricity was a great invention." Yes, my dear, but they soon made light of it.

Seamstress (Madura). A nice little novelty for your sewing-box would be an onion converted into a pin-cushion. Peel carefully, and mount on a brass stand. It makes an ideal holder for pins, but do not put needles into the cushion, or it will bring tears to their eyes.

Lovelorn (Second Line Beach). "Please give me some tips how to get into the good graces of my young lady." Well, dear boy; one method is always to address her as your Treasure. When she has got used to the idea, all you have to do is to appoint yourself Bank Examiner.

Full Quiver (Hyderabad). "I asked the photographer how much he would charge for a portrait of my family, and he said eight rupees for the dozen." Tell him you will come back in a year's time, dear sir. At present you have only eleven, haven't you?

Husband (Mari Indus). It seems that if even you complain to your wife about the supper, she retorts, "Prepare it yourself. You did not marry a cook." Auntie thinks you have only to bide your time, dear boy. Sooner or later she will wake you in the night, and say there are robbers outside. That is your opportunity to remark, "Get up yourself. You did not marry a policeman."

Worried (Bakri). "My wife is very discontented nowadays. She says I am not romantic enough, and that she wants something tender." When wives begin to talk like this, dear boy, it usually means that the husband is not generous enough. Anyhow, hard cash is a sovereign balm. Try giving her some legal tender.

Phi Phi (Chowringhee). "I have been reading your answers with much amusement, dear Auntie; but I do not think you know much about Calcutta." Oh, yes, dear sir, Auntie knows Calcutta quite well. It is the place there was a young lady of.

Tonsorial (Bangalore). "There was a notice outside the shop, 'First Class Hair Cut, Four Annas'. But when I went inside, the barber charged me six annas." Perhaps, dear boy, yours is not first-class hair.

X.Y.Z. (Madras). "A man in our office is a despicable boot-licker. The office cat has just had some kittens, and on Tuesday this man told the Managing Director (who is a staunch Imperialist) that the cat had loyally produced some Jubilee kittens. On Wednesday the Area Superintendent came in. This gentleman has quite different opinions, and our colleague told him that the kittens were supporters of *Swadeshi*." Your

colleague might have been correct on both days, my boy. Perhaps the kittens' eyes were not opened until Wednesday.

Troubled (Basin Bridge). "There is a lane running in front of our house, and my neighbour puts all her rubbish just outside my door. I have often remonstrated with her, but she remains in her own house and shouts abuse from the window." Auntie is afraid you will have difficulty in coming to an understanding with the lady, my dear madam. She is arguing from different premises.

Roman Father (Lucknow). "What can I do about the bad language used by my son? He has a dreadful vocabulary, and employs vulgar words that I have never heard of. Do you think that the other boys in the school are teaching him to swear?" Auntie cannot say, dear sir. But if you can learn from him, it is more likely that it is he who is teaching the other boys.

Prosody (Murshidabad). "The other day, I saw in the magazine a reference to Robert Burns, the famous Scottish poet. Did he really lead a dissolute life? I would like to know if he is still alive, and his present whereabouts." Auntie has no direct evidence about the poet's life, dear sir; unfortunately it was before Auntie's time. One of his enemies, however, has said that he broke the laws of God, and Man, and Metre. He is no longer alive. As for his present address, it is carved on his tombstone. It simply says, 'Robert Burns'.

Indigent (Madras). "I have ordered a suit from my tailor, and he refuses to give it to me until I pay twenty rupees off my account. Please tell me how to get the suit without paying the money." You will have to take advantage of the local geography. Observe carefully what tradesman has a shop opposite the tailor's. Suppose it is a baker. Go to the baker, and say you are giving a big tea-party, and order him to supply two hundred cakes at once. Then go into the tailor's, and ask for your suit. When the tailor demands his money, go to the door and call across to the baker, "When are you going to give me that two hundred?" "In half an hour," replies the baker. "Well, give twenty to this gentleman," you tell him. "Certainly!" replies the baker. The tailor will then let you take away the suit. All you now have to do is to step across to the baker, and say you cannot wait half-an-hour, and cancel the order. Of course, if the tradesman opposite is an ironmonger, you order two hundred nails of a kind he hasn't got, and so forth.

Resident (Yeravda). "It is very amusing, yet sad, to see the poor afflicted inmates here. Yesterday there was a poor man trundling a wheelbarrow round and round the garden, but the barrow was upside-down." Yes, my dear, it is very sad to think that all the inmates except yourself are wrong in the head. But Auntie thinks there might be method in this poor fellow's madness. Perhaps he has discovered that if he wheels the barrow the right way up, someone keeps on loading it with earth.

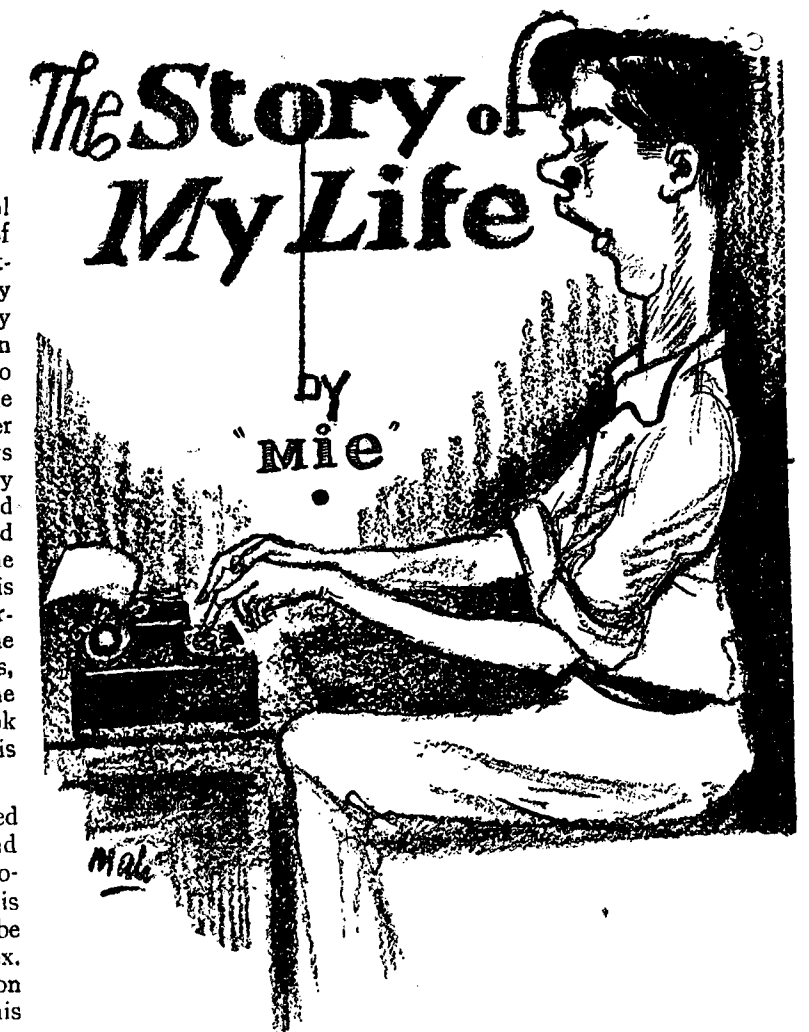
Stranded (Madras). "I have been touring India with a circus, featuring myself as Zwelski, the World's Wonder. Some time ago, the circus had to close down, owing to lack of funds. The artistes were paid-off alphabetically, and by the time they got to me, there was no money left." Auntie is sorry to hear of your predicament. You had better seek a position in another circus, and announce yourself as Aaron, the Amazing Acrobat.

xv

WHILE I was still in the high school classes, one day, I got a copy of one of G. W. M. Reynolds' writings. It was a cheap edition, very badly printed on rough paper and unattractively got-up. I had been told that Reynolds was an author who never minced matters and who had the courage to call a spade a spade. He had apparently said a thing or two about Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and other rulers of England—things which he himself amply proved by his arguments and revelations and which the defenders of British Royalty could not by any means controvert. So what the British Government did was to ban all his works and banish the author himself. Naturally the Indian Government followed the example and thus, explained the Reynolds fans, no book of his was ever found in any of the Public Libraries and no British publisher took it upon himself to issue a good edition of his works.

After hearing so much about this injured author I was anxious to read his novels and see for myself the extent of his courage. Another reason which prompted me to read his novels was the fact that he was supposed to be a frank fellow in matters dealing with sex. The private lives of monarchs of the reputation of the Prince Regent in the hands of this plain-speaking author could not help being attractive reading, I thought. Anyway I managed to get hold of a copy and smuggled it in. I placed it underneath my class text-books and opened it only when I was sure no one was looking. If anybody was about, I was innocently immersed in the human respiratory system or the account of how somebody brought the good news (whatever it was) from Ghent to Aix riding all the way, riding hard, when the telegraph, the telephone, the wireless or at least a carrier pigeon could have been easily employed. But these ruses were of no avail. Once I got on to the story, I forgot the precautions and sat on reading the book. My uncle who had a habit of wandering in to see what I was doing, caught me red-handed. He took the book from me: my manner must have betrayed me. He read the title and the author's name. It was easy enough to see those. A rotten photograph of the author adorned the cover. Then my uncle gave me a word or two of advice. He explained that such books were not for youngsters. What he liked to see me read were books like *Baron Munchausen*, *David Copperfield*, the works of Thomas Hardy etc. This made my keenness for Reynolds greater.

But a few years later my opinion changed. I went round to the other school and called the readers of Reynolds people of low taste, bores and prurient-minded proletarians. It was now their turn to complain, to call me a prig, a snob and a literary Pharisee.



Nowadays however nobody reads Reynolds. The modernist school of novelists beats Reynolds hollow in plain-speaking. When novelists had not even the courage to call trousers trousers for fear of offending their lady readers, it was all right for a Reynolds to create a furore by his fearless or frank descriptions. In those days the novel was not what it is to-day. There was a thumping good hero, a beyond-description-beautiful heroine, and a cruel and ruthless villain. The novel would run in the following lines.

"It was a beautiful evening. The gardens looked lovely in the red glare of the setting sun. The scent of sweet flowers was wafted by the cool breeze. Percy Fitz-Patrick walked on fully alive to the beauties around him, enjoying Nature, breathing in the rich laden air into his strong capacious lungs. Suddenly out of the stillness rang out a cry, a woman's shriek. Percy stopped and listened. Was he mistaken? etc. (His thoughts take him about five minutes during which the villain—for it is he pestering the heroine, yes the heroine—obligingly waits for him. At last the slow-witted Percy decides that it is somebody needing help and, of course, he rushes to the spot.) Percy clenched his fists, grimly squared his jaws and raced to the spot. When he reached there Percy found a young damsel in the clutches of a villain (who foolishly has been holding her for about ten minutes, the

girl screaming all the while.) Percy said, "Forbear! Unhand her, villain!" (and stands gaping at them tucking his sleeves and wasting time)."

The villain, (of course, cannot speak in bombast and he merely) utters a loud and contemptuous "Ha-Ha!" Brave as he was, Percy feels his blood turning into ditch-water and the girl nearly faints. But no, Percy cannot leave her like this. He has to show his prowess before her. So he hits the villain. There is a big fight at the end of which the villain holds up his hands and says 'enough'. Percy, ever a sport, holds back and the villain who is no other than the powerful Duke of Banzone, departs muttering imprecations and threats of vengeance.

Of course Percy volunteers to accompany the girl. But she says no. She thanks him with her swimming eyes and departs looking just once back from the end of the street.

She is poor, her father drinks and her mother is low and vulgar. That is why she does not allow Percy to accompany her. But she dreams of him, burns the bread, makes a mess of her sewing, but does not reply when questioned by her parents. She sighs a lot, too.

And Percy; Percy would beat a tram-car hollow in the matter of sighs. When he sighs, people in the houses on the other side of the street pull down their curtains complaining of a draught. He does not eat. He does not do anything. But his father (who had undergone all these experiences in his youth) suspects something.

But why elaborate? Percy meets the girl, makes love to her; there is trouble with (1) her parents (2) the Duke of Banzone (3) Percy's own father (4) his own stupidity. In the end, however, he marries her (if the author's digestion is good) and his father blesses the couple. The Duke of Banzone (1) is killed (2) repents, or (3) falls in love with another girl. But if the author has dyspepsia, Percy dies, the girl dies, Percy's father dies, sometimes his mother too. The girl's parents go mad, end in a work-house or commit suicide. Only the Duke survives. The girl probably kills herself to save herself 'from the something worse than death'. It is all either very sad or very cheerful. But in either case it is edifying. It makes you a better man.

But take the modernist novel:

"The rain continued to fall. The gutters were full and overflowed into the streets. The stink of putrefying refuse invaded the nostrils of anyone who stepped into the mire of the street. Ragged urchins with hunger written all over their face walked through the muddy pools squelching. Bill came out from under the shadow, reeling. He spat on the wall and passed on. Suddenly he caught hold of one of the urchins and clouted him and

pushed him into the gutter. With a curse he moved on. A rat crossed his path but Bill was too uncertain of step to run after it. Moreover just then Jane came out of the brothel. Bill caught hold of Jane's wrist. She had been weeping.....and starving for two days.....excepting for a little gin. Her eyes were red, sunken, fiery, challenging. "Weepin' were yer? Whom were yer wiv last night?"

"Lemme go Bill," she cried and tugged at his hands. "Ha, ha," Bill wheezed, "you dirty slut; sleeping with anybody yer like, eh? I'll teach yer....." With a scream.....etc.

Or if the novelist is describing the fashionable society.....

"Claude," purred Linda, "I love you. Kiss me..... Oh, Claude, why are you so cold? Don't you feel as if your soul weeps, as if it emerges out of a katharsis when you kiss me?"

Claude lit another cigarette. "It's time your husband's back." "My husband! My husband! That's all you know! All you feel! You fool.....!"

Suddenly Linda caught him in her arms and kissed him passionately, brutally, cruelly on the mouth..... kissed him as if she felt she could reach at his soul.

She fell back exhausted—to stare into the face of her husband who had like a mannerless boor walked in without knocking! How she hated him! How she wished to kill him! But how? Not poison, no, it was too dangerous. A revolver? Oh no. Oh God, how difficult it all was! Here he was looking at them with a smile on his face. A crooked smile. Why didn't Claude do something?

"Henry, I never knew you were coming back so early."

Henry turned to the side-board, picked up a cigarette and lit it.

"Sullivan is back," he announced after a pause. "He wants to see you."

She started. Sullivan, of all persons. This was freedom! How she loved him!.....

YES! I KNOW!

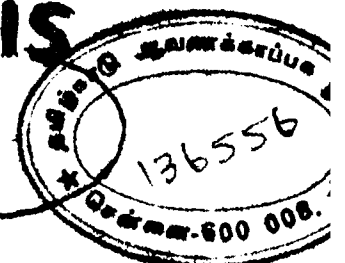


These are the answers to questions on page 20.

1. An exaggerated and bellicose patriotism derived from a French soldier named Chauvin.
2. Henry Jenkins, who claimed to have been born in 1501, and died in 1670.
3. It means a doleful complaint. The allusion is to the lamentations of Jeremiah in the Old Testament.
4. It is a spirit that makes its presence known by noises.
5. To take a decisive step once for all, regardless of consequences. The Rubicon, a river in Italy, was crossed by Julius Caesar when he decided to begin civil war, and hence the term.
6. When there is a large number of amendments to any bill in Parliament, permission is granted to 'hop' from one clause to another thus omitting all the unimportant items. Hence called 'Kangaroo'.



IF YOU ARE CROSS-EYED READ THIS



I am writing this from the local lunatic asylum.

Despite many insane opinions to the contrary, superstition plays quite an important part in our lives. Ever since I found that I had two ribs less than the normal quantity after I had opened an umbrella in my dining room, I have believed that, if you cross two knives at the table, as sure as eggs are hen-fruit, you'll find rats in the soup at night.

A friend of mine, one Smith by name, was a great believer in this strange thing, superstition. An old housewife told him one day that if he walked under a ladder, he should not spit backwards over his head as the common remedy averred, but should cross his fingers, hop along on one leg, and not uncross those fingers or stop hopping until he had seen a boss-eyed camel. One bright summer's morn Smith walked under a ladder. That was ten years ago. I read in the papers the other day that he'd been seen hopping along in the wilds of Africa, with his fingers still crossed. Whether a lion has attacked him ere this, mistaking him for a kangaroo, I cannot say.

The same housewife that was responsible for Smith's sad plight solemnly told me that if ever I heard an elephant snort three times, I should plug my ears with plasticine, scratch myself on the back for three days, and go out and milk a cow. I could do the first, managed to scratch myself on the back all right, but could never find anyone who would let me milk his cow. That plasticine is, therefore, still in my ears.

The superstitionists of this world have it that, if by any chance you are thoughtless enough to place your shoe on a table, you must at once dash out of the house, grab a carrot from somewhere, find a buffalo that will eat the carrot, and then ride that admirable cud-chewer into your bathroom, feeding it on your best cake of soap. And then, as it skilfully starts blowing bubbles, you are supposed to collect these, pack them carefully in a match-box, and despatch them to any relative of yours in

America. If you can't carry out this programme, then, as surely as you live, your hair will fall out at the roots, your eyes leave their sockets and start peering forth from your big toe-nails, and your teeth will hop out and make a meal of both your calves.

We all know that you should never dig a hole in the middle of your slice of bread at the dinner table. This superstition, I believe, originated from the following case.

Many years ago, when Napoleon was a squirt as big as a pea, there lived an old man called Henry Maggot, who was very un-superstitious. One night, while sitting down to a sumptuous repast of shirt buttons, bread and marmalade, he gouged the middle out of his slice of bread, packing the gouged-out portion in his mouth. His wife, a strong superstitionist, at once reprimanded him and threw the pepper-caster at him, striking him in the neck. With a hollow groan, he sank back in his chair, as dead as an ink bottle. His wife, alarmed, went up to him and thumped him in the stomach, thinking that he was suffering from an attack of ear-ache. With a resounding 'Plop' the bit of bread flew out of Henry's mouth and struck his wife in the left leg, blinding her for seven years.

I knew a man once who was strongly anti-superstitious. In the Club one evening, over a glass of milk, I reproved him for lighting three cigarettes with one match. He snorted at me rudely and I had to let the matter drop. But that very night, while going home, he was kicked in the spleen by a flea, and passed peacefully away, groaning every now and then, "A flea! A flea! My kingdom for a flea!"

Another sad case was that of Jones, who had a pretty wife. One day, so he told me afterwards, he saw a piebald louse ambling through his sitting-room. Scorning superstition, he laughed and forgot to make a wish, as he should have done in the circumstances. When he got home that night from office, he found

(Continued on page 32)

"PAPA, DEAR"

By S. NARASIMHAN

[There is a tragedy behind this tragic story. The writer, a young man full of promise, passed away after submitting this story as an entry to our Literary Competition—Ed.]

PROFESSOR P. Krishnan, as he walked along, saw a bevy of college girls standing on the bridge. Miss Vimala Veeraswamy among them, was sitting on the iron railing fencing the bank. She was entranced as she sat on the iron railing talking and laughing with her girl-friends, her tennis bat in her right hand and her silk handkerchief in her left. Professor Krishnan saw this vision as he walked past, acknowledged her salute and passed on thinking—as was characteristic of a professor of English literature—that she looked like a 'queen surrounded by her starry fays'. He had not gone ten yards when he heard a splash. He turned round and saw to his horror that the vision on the railing had disappeared. All the 'fays' were there, screaming and shouting for help, while a mass of eddying foam down in the water was all that could be seen of their 'queen'. The Professor hastily tore off his turban, coat and shirt, and leapt into the river.

It was a tough task to swim in the swollen floods. He fought against the flood with all his strength and half a mile down-stream, he brought her ashore more dead than alive and a regular mob surrounded him at the river's edge.

Miss Vimala Veeraswamy regained consciousness after fifteen minutes. Excepting the words "Thank you," she was too exhausted to say anything. A passing motor car was stopped and requisitioned by Professor Krishnan and Miss Vimala was hurried to her father's home in the cantonment.

Professor P. Krishnan was unmarried; Miss Vimala was even so; he had saved her like a true knight of old; ergo they ought to be married and lead a happy life 'ever after'. The college youths saw the whole thing in that light. Not that it would have been very displeasing to Professor Krishnan if things happened so. But Veeraswamy was Diwan Bahadur Sir Bhupathi Veeraswamy, K.C.I.E., a pillar of the British Empire, a well-known figure in commercial and banking circles. And Professor Krishnan was just a professor of Christ's College on Rs. 200 a month, whose parents nobody knew, and who, to make things worse, was short, and whose manners were 'so unimpressive'.

But the college youths insisted (in their own minds) that Miss Veeraswamy should, or ought to be Mrs.

He was twenty-nine and
she was twenty three
....And yet 'Papa dear'.



Krishnan. When Miss Veeraswamy came to college she found that even young fellows who used to look and stare at her on the sly had all 'virtuously' given up the habit. The young chaps who, of yore, used to swarm round her like bees round a fresh flower, were all studiously respectful, talking to her only to reply to her questions.

The *Mohammedan* of 30th January, 1929 printed the following in its News and Notes column.

"The engagement is announced of Miss Vimala Veeraswamy, only daughter of Diwan Bahadur Sir Bhupathi Veeraswamy, K.C.I.E., of Veeraswamy Park, Balipatam, with R.K.S. Iyengar, M.A., Bar-at-Law, Sub-Collector, Vizagapatam, Son of Sir R.K.R. Iyengar, Chief Minister of Nawalpore."

If the college youths could have protested without any impropriety, they would have done so. 'Nasty Prig that Sir Bhupathi' said some. Others with a sense of fun had come prepared with box cameras to photograph Mr. Krishnan and catch his doleful look as if it were visible. But Professor Krishnan was just Professor Krishnan. He was smiling all through. In the College Professors' retiring room, when a fellow lecturer asked him if he knew of the engagement, he announced, 'it was a love-match as I understand.' Sir Veeraswamy had invited him to more than a dozen parties since that accident of six months ago and the professor had availed himself of the pleasure. He knew it even months ago and had it from Mr. R.K.S. Iyengar himself when the latter was transferred from Balipatam to Vizag.

But the boys would not keep quiet. One fellow copied down the whole announcement from the *Mohammedan* on the black-board—just before the English professor came in. Professor Krishnan saw it as he entered, but pretending not to have seen it, began on Shelley straightaway. After thirty minutes, he turned coolly to read the whole thing on the board. Then he said, "You may send flowers and presents if you like on the wedding day to your friend and wish the couple a happy life. Now we will go back to Shelley if you please." 'Hail to thee blithe spirit', he wrote with enthusiasm on the board and began calmly scanning the lines, to the amazement of the boys.

A month later, there was another announcement in the *Mohammedan*.

"The marriage of Miss Vimala Veeraswamy and Mr. R.K.S. Iyengar is to take place at Veeraswamy Park, Ootacamund."

Miss Veeraswamy and Mr. R.K.S. Iyengar had both written a lovely letter to Prof. Krishnan requesting him to be present at the marriage ceremony at Ooty. Mr. R.K.S. Iyengar very romantically insisted that he was to receive his love from him who 'most heroically saved her for him'. Of course, it was a bit ironical though quite unintentional.

(Continued on page 30)

Specimen Love Letters

By 'EMU'



MAN OF LETTERS

The Man of Letters: It is impossible—I can no more suffer it in silence. I must either confess or die. A silvery moon in a severe sky, an ever-rolling ocean and Helen in the shape of you—these things have sealed my fate. Cupid, that blind rascally boy, has mortally wounded me with his fragile flower dart. And now, it is you or death.

My own, my moon, my Helen! Things continue to move unchanged by a law divine, just for you and me. 'I see thy slender form in the frail creeper agitated by the breeze; I see thy shy eyes in the frightened eyes of the deer; I see thy slow, majestic gait in the proud movement of the swans; but alas! not in any one of these is an entire likeness to thee.' O lovely one, sometimes, I forget surroundings and self and sing:

'Was this the face, that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?—'
So lovely, yet so lovely, you remind me of Gray's flower, 'born to blush unseen and waste its fragrance on the desert air'. You resemble Wordsworth's Lucy—a violet by a mossy stone, half hidden from the eye, fair as a star, when only one is in the sky'. Therefore, dear, with the ambrosia of your consent, revive me once more to life. If I live in this world, none but thou shalt be my partner.

The Politician: After a deep analysis in the 'second chamber' I have come to the one possible and sensible conclusion that I am in love, and that, I believe, will account for my change. A reference to the 'minutes' revealed that you were the object of my affection and

esteem. An interesting mental debate took place as to the wisdom of my choice. The majority were of a favourable opinion about you, while the minority were of opinion that a bachelor's is the only life worth living. A vote of confidence was moved and thus thou art firmly established in my heart.

What emboldens me to stand for this (s)election are the following reasons: I had had my modest share in the following movements for uplift of women. I fought unflinchingly for the introduction of the Sarda Bill; my sympathies are always with the Women Suffrage Movement, while it is my honest belief that Law should arm every woman with the weapon of divorce to enable her to face her husband bravely. These are few of the reasons which I believe, would justify my candidature. I expect full support from you and if I am successful, I can assure you of my unflinching support throughout life. If however, my proposals are not going to be viewed in a favourable light, I mean offering *satyagraha*—either picketing or hunger-strike. No doubt non-violence will be my creed.

The Doctor: For some time past, strange symptoms of uneasiness have taken possession of me. I feel a sort of burning sensation all over me and my temperature seems to have mounted many degrees beyond the normal. Deep diagnosis reveals that I am suffering from the fever of love.

Madam! my heart had been testified uniformly as a sound one, capable of standing severe strain. Friends have revealed after examination with stethoscopes that it was quite a sound one with a normal beat. A heart capable of such soundness and faith-



THE POLITICIAN



THE DOCTOR



THE SCIENTIST

fulness is laid at your feet to-day. I can assure you without exaggeration, that all the thermometers of this world are incapable of measuring the degree of my affection. If the 'Centigrade scale' cannot measure even a tenth of my affection, you can well imagine how little the 'Fahrenheit' one can do. It is this immeasurable affection of a sound heart I lay at your feet.

Words are unfortunately not enough either in the *Materia Medica*, or in Gray's *Anatomy* to express the intensity of my fever. If quinine is the only remedy for malaria, if aspirin is the anodyne for headache, if soda bicarb. is the sovereign cure for indigestion, thou art, darling, the very thing to alleviate my fever. Begging to be admitted to your ward soon.....

The Scientist: Madam! I was thinking long as to the proper mode of address. It was quite a Newtonian task, but at last I have chosen the above term. I am sure, that although the term may not be quite apt, yet it will be correct to the first decimal place at least.

It was while working with the spectroscope, I felt that strange feeling. I ran to the nearest barometer available in the lab, but the pressure was quite normal. The hygrometric conditions were also quite good, but this strange feeling persisted. Momentarily, I was baffled. Introspection revealed that I was feeling like that from the previous day. To be quite accurate, from 11 a.m. the previous day. (Precision is our watchword!)

Suddenly and luckily, Newton's first law of Motion flashed through my brain. "Everybody," he says, "remains at rest or moves uniformly in a straight line until compelled by an impressed force to act otherwise." There it is in a nutshell! I am neither restful nor are my movements uniform. It is force—sheer, absolute, powerful force. To discover that you were that force was the work of a moment. I ran round the room shouting 'Eureka!'

After what has happened, I have completely lost my faith in the Laws of Gravitation. The 'force of attraction' is neither proportional to the masses nor is it proportional to the square of the distance between the bodies. To err is human, probably, but still I can never permit it in a scientist.

I want you badly and at once. Do come immediately to share the joys and sorrows of my lab. During long winter evenings, we can have delightful chats all about science. Do you know anything about Newton's disc or about Davy's safety lamp? Yes—parallel

lines never meet and the area of a right angled triangle is half the base multiplied by the hypotenuse. I am quite sure, that you are aware when one lb. of cotton and 1 lb. of iron are let fall from the top of a tower, they reach the ground simultaneously. Don't gasp—the last is Galileo's work. There are a host of other things and if you don't know them already, it is high time you knew me.....



THE CAPITALIST

The Capitalist: A change has come over me in a changing world. After a futile struggle, I have been caught in the whirlpool of 'world slump' and now a profound depression has taken possession of me. Thou art the cause of this depression and thou I mean attaining at all costs. For the first time in my life, business instinct has failed me. Bulls and bears were swarming round you, now tossing up the price and now lowering it. You were enjoying a premium but I was waiting for an ebb. It did not come and your market value continued to mount. Finding waiting of no avail, I am rallying round in haste to close the bargain.

My mark, my dollar, my louise—nay, my sovereign! I want you badly, at all costs, whatever 'duties' your father might have imposed on you. I am prepared to exchange anything for you—let the exchange-rate be favourable or adverse, above or below par.

I own the International Steel Federation separately, while the United States Paper & Pulp Co., belongs to me jointly with another. I have set in motion a scheme for bringing under a monopoly all the shaving and shampooing saloons in the West. I mean now owning you—remember, in spite of dastardly competition. Before embarking on my venture, I first want to obtain your 'goodwill'. I may here tell you in strict confidence, that goodwill has been the secret of our success all these days.....

P. S. By the way, have you used the 'Scissors' manufactured by the International Steel Federation? I am sure, you have not missed the 'Gold Cross' envelopes manufactured by the U. S. Paper & Pulp Co. If you have really missed them, make amends by ordering a packet of them to-morrow. Every stationer stocks them.....

The Lawyer: *Prima facie*, it is clear. It may be a human act or an act of God—*Vis Major*—but still in one word, I am in love. To escape 'limitation acts', I am filing this suit of mine, hoping to receive an immediate and favourable consideration. Pressed with similar suits from all sides, you may not possess either the patience or the time to look at the qualifications, which nerve me to make this offer.



THE LAWYER

You are still a young girl and legally you are under the *patria protectas* of your father. You may therefore wonder why these offers should be made to you. If only you know the rudiments of Law—it will be my constant endeavour to make you familiar with it in our later life—you can see for yourself, how *consensus-ad-idem* is the *sine qua non* of a valid contract. This present contract of ours, I admit, is actuated more by motives of affection than by legal ones.

It is my sincere belief, however, that even in social contracts like marriages, the element of *consensus-ad-idem* can never be out of place. The suit of mine is therefore my offer and I will be eagerly awaiting your letter of acceptance. I am only too well aware that obtaining your consent is only a part of the affair, probably the better part of the entire transaction. There is your father to be conciliated; and to remain satisfied without obtaining his assent will be, to say the least, foolish. The authority to the above statement is afforded by the rule in Pinnel's Case, where it was held that a part payment of a debt cannot operate as a satisfaction for the whole debt. These are, dear, the qualifications and protestations of a loving heart. Don't keep the suit pending, but deliver judgment soon to relieve me from suspense and intense misery.....

"PAPA, DEAR"—(Continued from page 27)

Five days before the marriage, Professor Krishnan had very high fever. In delirium he spoke many things, mostly about Vimala's wedding. A telegram was despatched to Ooty by his doctor, announcing that Professor Krishnan was too ill to be present.

A photograph was published in Saturday's papers. Strangely enough, there was a figure in the newspaper photograph very much like Mr. Krishnan. Some said it was his ghost. Others that it was a deliberate taunt by the 'picture bureau' people. It might have been some other gentleman—but all the same, it was strange, very strange.

Two years later, there was an announcement in the newspapers that Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar was delivered of a male child. "The child" wrote the correspondent, "was named Krishnan, after Professor Krishnan, the heroic deliverer of Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar, who saved her from the floods at Baliapatam in 1929. Professor Krishnan was unavoidably *present*."

It was really a misprint. The correspondent had written 'unavoidably *not* present', but sometimes the newspaper type-setters do make mistakes. Everybody at Baliapatam read it and laughed. Of course Professor Krishnan had not gone to Vizag at all for the christening. But there can be malice even in mistakes.

It was 1932. One morning the newspapers carried the big headlines: 'Young Sub-Collector Dashed to Death by his Horse' and 'Frightened Horse Kills Sub-Collector'.

"Mr. R. K. S. Iyengar," wrote the *Daily Sun*, "was dashed to death in Thiagaraya Road by the horse

on which he was riding. The Municipal lights suddenly went out at 8 p.m. due to some mistake in the powerhouse. The horse suddenly got wild and dashed its young rider against an electric lamp post. Mr. R. K. S. Iyengar died immediately. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar."

A full year and six months had gone by. Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar was living at Sir B. Veeraswamy's mansion at Baliapatam. Sir B. Veeraswamy was lying ill, stricken down by paralysis. The young widow had felt the shock of her husband's tragic death very much. She was never seen out for a year. But time had assuaged the wounds. She was now taking her normal part in life, was seen at the ladies' clubs and here and there, a simple, beautiful woman.

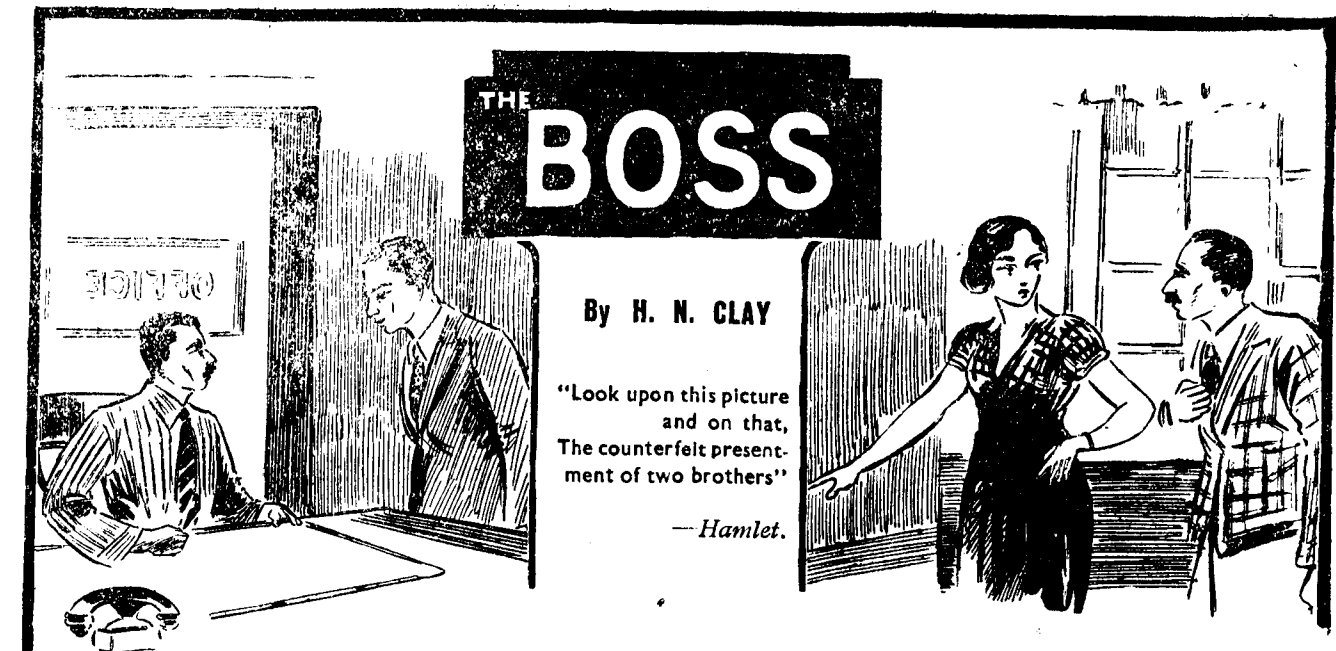
Professor Krishnan had not been seen at Sir B. Veeraswamy's so often as before. He went occasionally and came back very soon. One day when he went there, Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar was in the nursery. The child had been very mischievous and the young lady was playing with the child who was seated on a table.

He had gone there to tell the mother of his long suppressed feelings towards her. Mrs. R. K. S. Iyengar met him gaily with the words "Papa dear, do look at your name-sake. He won't go to sleep even though it is late."

"Papa dear".....That was a stone wall! "Papa dear".....Professor Krishnan almost reeled at the words.

He was twenty-nine and she was twenty-three..... And yet 'Papa dear'!

He returned home a sadder man.



It was the office-boy who first brought the news.

"The boss is in an awful temper to-day," he told the assistant clerk, "somebody's in for it."

The assistant clerk looked surprised.

"Ho!" he said. Curious; this assistant clerk was. He thought he'd make sure for himself whether the boss was really cross that morning or whether the little urchin was merely 'gassing' as usual.

So he found a pretext to enter the boss's sanctum. Assistant clerks do it easily, I mean find pretexts to do things. And as a rule they get away with whatever it is that they find pretext to do. But not the assistant clerk in this story. No sir, he got it in the neck.....where the astronomer got the.....

"What the hell do you mean by messing about in that corner? Who called you in here?" said the boss irate-like.

"Sir," said the assistant clerk surprised-like, "I thought you rang the bell."

"Ho, you did, did you?" said the boss. "Well I didn't. GET OUT. And the next time you think I rang the bell when I didn't you can count yourself fired."

"Yes, sir," said the assistant clerk.

Then the short-hand typist came in for his share of the whatever-it-was-there-to-share.

"Did you send for me sir?" said the short-hand typist respectfully.

"What do you mean, did I send for you?" said the boss breaking the eraser in two. "Of course I sent for you. You wouldn't be here if I hadn't sent for you."

"Quite so, sir," said the short-hand typist smiling weakly.

"Don't 'quite so' me sir," said the boss, "now take this down."

"Y—Yess sir," said the short-hand typist.

Then came the turn of the cashier. You know who I mean. The chap who adds two and two together and puts three on the credit side to show the share-holders, and puts five on the debit side to show the income-tax collector. Now then we will proceed with the story. The story which I have entitled 'the boss'. Where was I? Ah yes, the cashier.

"Where did you learn arithmetic?" was the boss's first shot after the cashier had stepped into his sanctum.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the cashier taken aback in a manner of speaking.

The boss glared. Yes, his eyes jutted nearly an inch out of the sockets.

"I hate people who beg pardon easily," said the boss venomously, in a manner of speaking. "Your arithmetic is rotten."

"Yes, sir," said the cashier meekly.

"Your hand-writing is worse. And you have the silliest face I have ever seen outside the zoo."

"Yes, sir."

"Yes and you can go and put yourself down a ten per cent cut."

"Yes, sir."

Yes, sir, the boss was in an awful temper, the boss was. He had got to be, I mean, otherwise there would be no point in this tale.

In the evening the boss's car came to a halt at the boss's house.

"You are a good for nothing chump," said the boss to the chawufgre... er... the chyurffeawf... I mean the motor-driver.

"Yes, sir," said the motor-driver.
"You are only fit to drive a perambulator when you are not drunk."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I don't drink."

"Don't talk back. And bring the car round at eight to-morrow."

"Yes, sir," said the motor-driver pushing in his clutch or is it the carburettor?

The boss opened the gate. He strode up the garden-path and he pushed the bell at the door. His wife opened it.

"Good evening, darling," said the boss smiling and stepped inside.

"George!" said the boss's wife. Just one word, folks, but full of menace if you know what I mean.

"Y-Yess darling?" said the boss.

"How dare you bring all that mud into my house?" said the boss's wife pointing at the boss's boots.

"I beg your pardon, darling....." said the boss.

"You know George how I hate people who beg pardon easily. Go and wipe your feet on the door mat."

"But darling....."

"Go!"

"Yess, darling," said the BOSS.

IF YOU ARE CROSS-EYED—(Continued from page 25)

that he was the proud owner of triplets that were spotted all over and had beards.

My wife startled me the other night. Feeling in a very musical mood, I had commenced singing *Annie Laurie* over the vegetables. With a sudden screech of horror, my wife rapidly swallowed 62 carrots and started whistling the dead march.

"What did you want to do that for?" I asked, as her complexion began to reflect the hue of the carrots.

"Don't you know you shouldn't sing at the table?" was her truly feminine answer. "And that's the only way to counteract the bad influence you started!"

"Good Heavens! I forgot!" I exhaled, and went on to tell her all about poor old babbling Brown, the anti-superstitionist I had met in America. When he had been the thirteenth to sit down at a certain big dinner and had been told to watch himself carefully in the near future, he had rudely blown his nose at the company, (using a handkerchief, of course). The very next evening Brown went to a theatre. In the seat he chose, some careless fruit-seller had left an orange. On this Brown sat with gusto, and was immediately assailed by a blood curdling attack of hydrophobia.

Encouraged by my wife's startled eyes, I recounted the case of Adolf Tapeworm, the celebrated crawling barrister, famous for the roads and byways his stomach had scraped along. He had, unthinkingly it is true, killed a spider while crawling to his office one day. This, as everyone knows, brings very bad luck.

Before Adolf reached his office, he was startled by shrieks and hoots of alarm resounding through the

street. Looking up from his recumbent position, he saw, galloping down the narrow street, a runaway hen. With superb courage, Adolf rose upon his hind legs and just managed to prevent the hen from crashing into and destroying a stationary steam roller, not, however, before he had sustained severe injuries himself, due to the hen pecking his moustache off.

It is an established fact that if you meet a cross-eyed person on a Friday, you must stop him or her and discuss the weather. If, after seeing such a person, you thoughtlessly pass on, you are bound to get an attack of measles before nightfall. The other day I saw a beautiful woman of ninety or so, who was staring fixedly at the bridge of her nose.

"How do you do?" I ventured, hoping to draw her into conversation.

"Get out of my way, you sheikh!" she blathered and hit me in the ear with a bag of eggs she was carrying. When I told my wife about it, her heartless comment was:

"You know you mustn't talk to a cross-eyed person on a Friday unless she or he is carrying a leg of mutton."

My wife asserts that the Christmas decorations should be taken down one month after Christmas day, made into a nice tasty hash, and served for lunch. Otherwise bad luck will result. This, dear readers, she did this year, and now the Doctor tells me that I won't be able to stir from my bed till Christmas, 1935!

There's superstition for you! And a wife for me!

Keep this copy of The Merry Magazine.

It may bring you a Prize.

Mr. Ram Chandra
gazed unsee-
ingly at the

newspaper in front of him. To the casual observer it would have seemed as if Mr. Ram Chandra was in a sort of stupor, trance or catalepsy. But behind that stony stare, raced a mind as agile as that of Solomon. A philosopher but never a wiseacre, Mr. Ram Chandra read in silence the announcement in the advertisement column of the *Daily Wire*—

A collection of Old Masters and rare antiquities will be exhibited to the general public on Saturday afternoon. Admission fee: Re. 1 (including tax).
Mr. Ram Chandra was a failed Master of Arts, and so it was with a feeling of awe that he contemplated the announcement.

When a boy, Mr. Ram Chandra's schoolmaster had instilled into him a passion for painting. This passion had been allowed to cool somewhat, and now, middle age demanded a resuscitation of youthful desires.

The day following was Saturday, and as Mr. Ram Chandra wended his way to the Exhibition he became master of the situation. A rupee was quickly handed over, and he commenced his study of masters old and new. Rembrandt, that past-master of characteristic contrast of high lights and deep shades, in his treatment of chiaroscuro (sic) enthralled Mr. Ram Chandra. He suffered from a stiff neck long before he had reached the end of the first wall. A comfortable settee was placed in the centre of the hall. Mr. Ram Chandra flopped into its comfortable depths, and gazed spell-bound at the galaxy of master-pieces.

One portrait in particular held his gaze. It was an oil-colour of a lady of fashion of the year 1641. She seemed to throw glances of deep appeal at Mr. Ram Chandra. Her eyes were full of unshed tears, resembling mother-of-pearl in limpid pools. The picture was perfect in colouring and detail and Mr. Ram Chandra felt irresistibly drawn towards her. The size of the portrait was 12" x 8".

Unable to avoid the lure, Mr. Ram Chandra approached the painting. A furtive glance around to see if he was being observed, and he had the framed damozel under his coat. No one had apparently witnessed his manoeuvre. He quickly worked his way towards the door and safety. A burly attendant stood near the portals. Buttoning up his coat so that only the slightest bulge was visible to the casual eye, Mr. Ram Chandra strolled nonchalantly past the keeper, and went down the steps.

But little did Mr. Ram Chandra realise how disaster dogs the steps of the most careful. A piece of banana-skin was the cause of his failure to possess an Old Master. On such small trifles do the greatest schemes fall. His foot met the banana-skin squarely; his legs shot out perpendicularly in the air, and Mr. Ram Chandra landed horizontally on the cold, hard pavement. The painted damozel was flung a few feet in the air, and settled down to rest very near his head.

RAM CHANDRA'S HOBBIES

No. 3. OLD MASTERS

to restore his usual cheery good humour. 'It was her eyes that had caused all the trouble,' ruminated Mr. Ram Chandra. His quest for Old Masters would be taken up with vim on the morrow. Money was no object; the spirit of the chase was in his blood.

Next day, Mr. Ram Chandra visited all the art-dealers' shops for miles around. He did not neglect even the heterogeneous collection of odds and ends hidden in the dark shops of the *bikari-wallas*.

At last he lighted on an old stained oak frame containing the half-visible portrait of a child romping with a dog. Dark with the smoke and grime of ages, it looked a real bargain to Mr. Ram Chandra. He had read somewhere that wonderful picture discoveries had been made in old, curio shops, and that when cleaned up they often revealed Old Masters. Many a Rembrandt had been discovered this way.

Mr. Ram Chandra asked the bespectacled shop-keeper the price of the dirty portrait. He was astounded when he was asked only Rs. 5. But he recollected that the man could not possibly know the real value. The price paid, and the 'find' wrapped up in a piece of old sacking, Mr. Ram Chandra returned home to gloat over the possession of an undoubted Old Master. It would require cleaning, of course, but it was bound to prove valuable.

From the chemists he purchased all the cleaning materials and preservatives he could remember. As a preliminary skirmish, Mr. Ram Chandra began his operations on the base of the painting. He was overcome with excitement when he brought to light a representation of a child's coloured ball. He knew then that he had struck luck. For five rupees only!

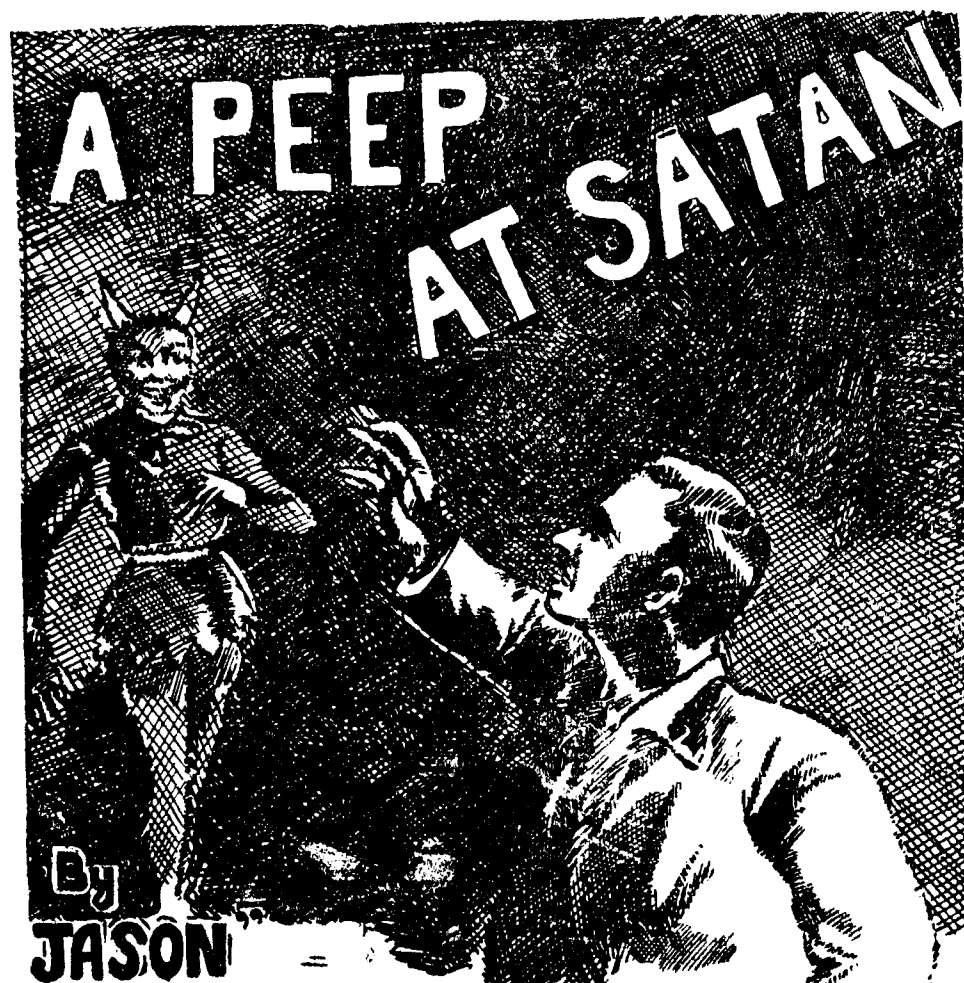
With feverish haste Mr. Ram Chandra re-commenced the cleaning of the whole picture. After five hours hard rubbing and sweating he could plainly discern the picture of a rosy-faced child playing with a huge retriever dog and a ball. The child's mother was standing near, with a look of adoration in her eyes. She held something in her hand—something resembling a cake or a tablet. Mr. Ram Chandra was slightly puzzled, but concluded that it did not make much difference what the article was.

The picture cleaned, he turned his attention to the frame. The brass disc was black with soot, and possibly, thought Mr. Ram Chandra, contained the clue to the identity of the painter. A few minutes later he peered closely at the inscription, and fell back—overcome with rage and humiliation. The inscription was: ".....SOAP! for cleanliness!" An advertisement of a well-known soap!

The passers-by stopped; the door-keeper roared and Mr. Ram Chandra got up and ran for dear life. A bump, the size of a master-mariner's nose appeared on his head.

Fortunately, the crowd assembled near the exhibition did not take up the chase, and Mr. Ram Chandra arrived home, sore in body and rebellious in spirit. An appetising dinner failed

By
'CHAPPIE'



HECTOR Bindon looked across the table sharply.

"If I were you, Tulsidas," he observed seriously, "I should give Upendrapai a miss. Of course, if you are determined—"

"It's not quite a question of determination, Mr. Bindon. Courtesy, that's the crux of the matter."

"Well, don't say I haven't warned you. He's a dangerous man to associate with. A sorcerer, mind you, of evil repute, 'tis said he has mortgaged his soul to the Devil; personally, I'd keep him at arms' length."

"But surely, Mr. Bindon, you don't believe such rumours?"

"I do and I don't, which is as Irish, maybe, as I am. We're old friends, Tulsidas, have a care—that's my advice."

Tulsidas glanced at his watch. "I'm seeing him at eleven o'clock," he commented. "Must be getting along: deuce of a lot to do to-day. I'll pop in again before leaving Madras—end of the week, say."

"Right, I'll be expecting you."

"Don't altogether like it," ruminated Bindon, after Tulsidas had left. "Still it's not my affair."

Upendrapai was a tall slim man, with sharp features and of distinctly saturnine disposition; nevertheless, he could be pleasingly affable and cheerful. Keen piercing eyes were concealed behind dark horn-rimmed glasses.

Tulsidas received an effusive reception. He soon forgot Bindon's warning, and became interested in discussing various scientific and occult topics.

An hour or so passed; they were sipping coffee. Tulsidas suddenly stiffened, his spine tingled, his heart throbbed violently.

"God!" he jerked out in a hoarse voice, "what was that?"

"What was what?" enquired Upendrapai quietly.

"A cold, clammy hand—it touched me—on the forehead. It was uncanny—"

"Imagination, Tulsidas. What's wrong with you?"

There was a choking cry from Tulsidas. "It touched me again," he gasped faintly.

Upendrapai moved his chair, and sat down in front of his visitor.

"You're getting nervy," he observed. "I'll get you some brandy, keep a grip on yourself."

"Nervy," whispered Tulsidas, "it's not that, I can sense some unearthly presence even now."

Upendrapai poured out the brandy. Tulsidas gulped it down avidly, could feel the fiery spirit coursing through his veins.

"Feeling better?" enquired Upendrapai.

"Something—" Tulsidas began saying. Abruptly he became rigid in his chair, his hands gripped the arms and he leaned forward staring intently at the wall opposite.

"Look," he managed to say faintly. "Oh! It's gone!"

"What's gone?"

"The Devil! I saw his face, he was leering at me."

"Piffle! You must have been drinking heavily of late. Next you'll see green rats running up the walls and pink rabbits dancing a tango—"

"I don't drink," murmured Tulsidas, "it's not that, but something supernatural."

Upendrapai removed his glasses, fixed a pair of baleful eyes upon Tulsidas.

"Don't look at me like that," shrieked Tulsidas. He tried to rise but, his limbs refused to function; an unseen force seemed to hold him down. "Let me go," he continued. "You are—"

"Exactly!" interjected Upendrapai. "First I drugged you so that you should not move, now I am hypnotising you, and later I may kill you." He stretched out two bony hands with long talon-like fingers and laughed, as if some madness were upon him. "In a few moments I shall put you to sleep. You will become the property—mind, body and soul—of the master."

"The Master?"

"He will decide your fate," continued Upendrapai. "You shall meet him. Enough," he concluded, "now sleep—sleep. Until I touch you again you will know nothing. Sleep—sleep—sleep!"

Hypnotic oblivion came to Tulsidas, and he slept.

It was two o'clock. Upendrapai approached the sleeping Tulsidas, and touched his arm lightly.

"Awake," he said, "and hear me." Tulsidas' eyes opened.

"I am listening," he replied.

"The Master is coming. I shall leave you alone. Count slowly up to one hundred, and be prepared. Understand?"

"Yes."

"Ninety-nine—one hundred," Tulsidas had counted.

"I am here!" came the words in a drawling monotone. "I am the Master. Gaze upon me!"

Tulsidas sat up petrified. Where there had been only a voice he now saw a figure, clear and distinct.

He was in the presence of Satan!

A sombre figure, with his horns, his cloven hoofs, sleek black hair, gleaming white teeth, such was the Devil. His dress—all black—trunk breeches, a sash, a shirt and a cloak.

"The Devil!" murmured Tulsidas.

"His Satanic Majesty himself," was the reply. "Now, listen to me."

"Yes, sir."

"No, Tulsidas, that will not do. 'Your Majesty' when we meet and when we part, and 'sir' during conversation. I am no believer in unnecessary waste of words."

"Thank you, your Majesty, I'll not forget."

"'Tis best you do not. You are now my servant; your soul is no longer your own: it belongs to me. I have selected you, Tulsidas, for a difficult task. I shall make you famous and fabulously rich. By no accident did you meet Upendrapai: it was my wish. You are a young man of great promise, and through you I intend to destroy the world!"

"God!" murmured Tulsidas. "Release me."

"No, Tulsidas, the die is cast. You have been chosen. Nothing can now be changed. My plans are complete, my decision irrevocable."

Tulsidas sighed, and then suddenly brightened up.

"You're joking," he ventured.

"Certainly not. I've had my eye on you ever since you stole mangoes in your school-days. Briefly I will outline my plan. Inspiration from me will result in your discovering a new force or energy such as the peoples of this world have never dreamt of. It will be harnessed and used for a time. Then, when I decide the moment is ripe, some man will press the wrong button and the world will go off 'pop'. Simple, isn't it?"

"Theoretically yes, sir. But what happens to me? And why destroy the world?"

"Ah! As usual, Tulsidas, self first! I shall take you with me."

"Hell!" muttered Tulsidas.

"Not a bad place really, Tulsidas, as you shall see some day. Much pleasanter, I can assure you, than this steaming city. Now, you asked a second question. Why should I destroy the world? I shall answer it as succinctly as possible. Plenty of food in the world; millions starving; war in the atmosphere; nations snarling at each other like wild animals, awaiting a favourable opportunity to spring; unsolved problems; infant mortality; epidemics, plague; financial chaos; nudist colonies in cold countries; lots more. In short, Man is a failure! Satisfied?"

"Sounds pretty convincing, sir. But after all, we are doing our best and improving gradually. Why not give Man another chance?"

"No, Tulsidas, I have decided! We'll leave the subject now. You can return to Calcutta and pursue your life as if we have never met. I shall, however, come to you occasionally and you will have a few minor duties to perform till the time comes for your supreme test. "Keep ready a selvyt cloth and some nail polish for my horns, some wax polish for my hoofs, then you can keep them spick and span when I come." Satan paused.

"Might I," suggested Tulsidas, "not clean your teeth and manicure your finger nails also, sir?"

Illustrated by
"ESVI"

"Ah! That's a good idea—the manicuring part. By all means prepare for it. But my teeth—they're false and I keep them in a spirit bath when I take them out. I've also spare sets."

"Thank you very much, sir. It's more than a royal appointment."

"Quite, unfortunately you cannot advertise it. And now, have you a handkerchief with you?"

"Certainly, sir, a silk one." Tulsidas began taking it out of his pocket.

"I don't want it," remarked Satan. "I only asked the information and now—"

"Yes, sir?"

"I am going to strangle you!"

"But why?"

"For your sarcasm."

"But——"

"Oh, of course you didn't mean it as such, but, I'm taking no chances. Satire provokes me. Keep perfectly still while I choke you. I hate using more force than necessary."

Satan advanced, his fingers gripped Tulsidas's throat. They felt cold and clammy. The clammy hand which had touched his forehead! Tulsidas remembered it now. His breathing became difficult, he was on the verge of unconsciousness. The Devil relaxed his grip, livid finger marks remained on Tulsidas's throat.

Slowly Tulsidas came to his senses. "So," he was thinking, "he didn't strangle me after all."

Satan laughed. "I think you will do, Tulsidas," he remarked. "Not a whimper! I knew you didn't really intend being sarcastic. Wrap that silk handkerchief round your throat, there will be marks there for some days, a reminder that this episode of your life is not a dream."

"May I go now, sir?" enquired Tulsidas.

The luminosity was assuming shape, that of a coffin placed on end.



"Yes, and keep away from that Bindon fellow. That's an order, mind you. Good-day, Tulsidas."

"Good-day, Your Majesty."

Tulsidas, back in his hotel, examined his throat. That was enough for him. He hunted out a muffler and was en route for Calcutta the same evening.

It was a month later that Hector Bindon was assailed by great uneasiness of mind. Tulsidas had not called as promised. A letter to his Calcutta address elicited no reply. Obviously something was wrong. Bindon decided to investigate.

To enquire of Upendrapai, he felt, would be useless. There was mischief afoot, that was his firm conviction. Bindon, personally, was afraid neither of the Devil himself nor his satellites; he had trust in a Higher Power. His preliminary investigation proved disappointing. Upendrapai was away, his house locked up. At the outset he was foiled. Eventually, he decided to break into the house, cherishing the slender hope that he might chance on a clue which would put him on the track of Tulsidas.

Equipped with a few tools and a torch, Bindon reached the house late one night. Quickly forcing a window, he climbed over the sill and cautiously went from room to room, ransacking cupboards and bureaux, but drawing a blank. Presently, he was in the last room. There was an idol, on a raised platform on one side. It was Upendrapai's Poojah apartment, destitute of furniture, no curtains, just four bare walls, the door and a shuttered window.

He was about to go, then stopped abruptly. 'Tick, tick,'—he had heard it—very faint but distinct. A death-watch beetle? No, it couldn't be. He stood still, listening keenly. It came again, 'tick, tick'. The floor vibrated under his feet. It was sinking slowly, only the idol on its platform remained stationary.

Seating himself on the platform he watched the floor go down gradually. Too late he realised his mistake. Why hadn't he left the room and gone into the corridor outside? There lay no way of escape.

Little by little the floor sank, nine, ten, about twelve feet. Then it stopped. Bindon flashed his torch along the walls, there appeared to be no opening. He was quite calm.

"A pretty kettle o' fish and no mistake," he murmured.

He sat thoughtful. Had the floor been operated by some human agency? Or was there a timed mechanism? If the latter, it might be hours—days—before it again came into action.

Suddenly he rivetted his eyes on a faint luminous glow that appeared in one corner of the chamber down below. Almost imperceptibly the glow was spreading. Presently it extended to the whole chamber, then once more came that 'tick', 'tick'; the floor was rising. He switched off his torch and sat alert and expectant.

The luminosity began to concentrate near the centre of the floor as if it were being gathered together. It was assuming shape, that of a coffin placed on end.

To Bindon it was puzzling and disconcerting—nothing more. Was it some stage-trick engineered by Upendrapai? Or had it a deeper explanation? Bindon pondered, then he spoke.

"Upendrapai," he said, "come out of your hiding place, if you are responsible for this. Don't think to scare me. Even your master, the Devil, who has enchained your soul, cannot not do that."

There came a subdued mocking laugh—that was the only response. Simultaneously, a peculiar thrill passed through Bindon's being. He sensed the nearness of some unseen presence; it kindled a feeling of supreme confidence.

Another foot and the floor would reach its proper

level, the 'shape' would be a mere two yards distant then——

"Don't move, Hector Bindon. There is no floor. It is merely an illusion. I walk on the air." The luminous figure—if such it could be termed—had spoken. Bindon, sceptical, reached down—into nothingness!

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I am Satan!"

"The devil you are. Show yourself, old bean. I'm anxious to meet you."

"More respect, Hector Bindon; do not anger me."

Bindon snapped his fingers at the shape.

"That," he snorted, "is the sum total of my respect for you. I'll tweak your nose presently, and, don't be so free with my Christian name; Mr. Bindon to you, Percy."

Like a mist wafted away, the luminosity vanished at that moment and Bindon looked upon the Devil. There was a brief silence, then——

"Mr. Bindon," Satan commenced saying.

"That's better," interjected Bindon. "You've learned your first lesson, you damned imp of the darkness. Spout out anything you've got to say to Hector Bindon. I'm all ears."

"Mr. Bindon, I didn't come here to quarrel——"

"Quarrel! Should think you didn't, but I wish you had. By the time I have finished with you, your own mother wouldn't recognise you." He dangled a knobbly, closed fist towards the Devil's nose.

"Just allow me to speak," replied Satan suavely.

"Alright, but don't say anything to provoke me."

"We will adjourn to the library. There we can be seated and talk in comfort. Already I have permitted you to see in the dark; loaned you a little of my own power. Now you may walk on empty nothingness. But, remember this, my loans have to be paid for heavily; in fact I 'out-Shylock Shylock'."

"A fig for your powers!"

Satan merely sighed as they proceeded to the library. He had encountered a 'hard' case and he knew it!

"Mr. Satan, please."



.....and Bindon looked upon the Devil.

"Mister Satan! No, nothing doing. I'll make it Cuthbert, if that suits you better. You're rather a dandy and it's appropriate. Now, don't waste time arguing."

"Alright, have it your own way."
"I intend to do that."

"You are now," observed Satan, "in a state of divine afflatus, inspirited and inspired by God. I do not, therefore, desire to harm you."

"You couldn't, even if you tried."

"Maybe not. I don't wish to try. I'm here in a friendly spirit. You are seeking Tulsidas; he will come to no harm, of that I assure you. He has most important work to do for me in the near future. He will become famous and—" As if to direct special attention to what he was saying, Satan leaned over and touched Bindon's hand. Hector snatched it away.

"Don't do that," he remarked sharply. "You've got hands like a preserved cod-fish."

"My body is like that, I can't help it."

"You'll get warmed up one of these days when God pitches you into your own hell."

"There's no hell as you visualise it," replied Satan. "Surely you don't believe—"

"I'm not arguing the point, get back to your subject."

"Ah! As I was saying, Tulsidas will become famous and rich. D'you know, Mr. Bindon, if you would join me—"

Bindon cut Satan short. "None of that temptation business with me, Cuthbert. Otherwise I'll take hold of your horns and twist your neck."

"You're a hard man to deal with," observed the Devil.

"I am," replied Bindon. "Now listen to me. You'll in no way injure Tulsidas, you say?"

"That I promise."

"Very well, for the present I'll leave you to your own business. I just wanted to know he was alright. But, mind you, we'll meet again—so behave yourself son."

"Sure, I'll be looking you up occasionally. *Au revoir*, Mr. Bindon."

"Cheerio, Cuthbert, an' bad cess to ye!"

The Devil called upon Tulsidas a few days later.

"Good evening, Your Majesty."

"Same to you, Tulsidas. Everything ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"Right, get busy. I've not much time to spare."

"Met your friend, Bindon," commenced Satan as Tulsidas was polishing his horns. "He was looking for you. Assured him you were O. K. Quite an entertaining gentleman—I'll give you the gist of our chat."

"And you mean to say, sir," queried Tulsidas as Satan concluded, "he defeated you?"

"No exactly—but he had God on his side. I don't contest with God. Nevertheless, I'll get Bindon some day."

"But he threatened to strike you and—"

"Oh! I knew God wouldn't let him do that. Finish-ed? Thanks! I'll be going: bags of other work. Good-night, Tulsidas."

"Good-night, Your Majesty!"

Satan, by no means an idle fellow, hurried away.

Tulsidas pondered. Bindon had defeated Satan! Why shouldn't he do the same? The seeds of 'mutiny' took root in his heart; he set out for Madras to consult Hector Bindon.

"And next time," continued Tulsidas, after having explained his intentions to Hector Bindon, "when old Satan comes to me, he'll get the surprise of his life. I'm going to give him a bit of cave-man stuff, the real brand. I'll pitch his damned nail polish and everything straight into his face, spit on him and give him a horse-whipping. I'll teach him—making me call him 'Your Majesty' and be his dashed valet."

"Is that all?" asked Bindon quietly.

"It's all I can think of, maybe I'll do more."

"Personally, I'd advise you to forget it."

Tulsidas is now a monk.

It was late one night when the Devil tapped on Bindon's door.

"Come right in," shouted Bindon. They met on the threshold.

"Hello! Cuthbert," was Bindon's greeting. "Take a seat, make yourself comfy. I can't shake hands—your's are too chilly, and, as you're not a lady, I'm not kissing you or pinching your cheeks."

"Really, Mr. Bindon, you're incorrigible."

"I expected you," observed Bindon, changing the topic. "You've seen Tulsidas of course?"

"Yes! You've upset all my plans with your damned interference."

"Shouldn't wonder. Then, it was your own fault."

"Admittedly I was a bit indiscreet. Still, I'll get him back."

"You'll leave him alone."

"But, Mr. Bindon, you can't dictate to me like that. Only God can be my master, and—through Tulsidas I intended to destroy this world."

"Wonderful! Well, you can take me as God's emissary. And as I am good enough to be your master, you'll do as I tell you. As for destroying the world—postpone the programme, at any rate until after I've handed in my checks. Savvy?"

"But this is preposterous, it's—"

"Final! And if you argue any more, I'll ask God's permission to flatten you out like a pie-crust under a steam hammer. Pish to you and your ideas. D'you get me?"

Satan sighed deeply; he knew defeat.

"You're too hard, Mr. Bindon," he murmured. "But I suppose I'll have to respect your wishes. Some day—"

"Stow that temptation stuff, Cuthbert. Will you take a spot of champagne?"

"Just a sip. Thanks! I'll be off now."

"Put a cigar in yer pocket, Cuthbert, an' cheerio, an' bad cess to ye once again."

"Bye-bye, Hector Bindon."

"Here—"

But the Devil was gone.

GHOST OF CAESAR

By 'RAM'

THE papers at the time were raving in headlines about spiritualism. Papers will go into headlines over almost anything if they think either that the public is with them or that they can bully the public into being with them.

A headline gave Timothy O'Hara his big idea—though, to do him justice, he sometimes had ideas that were not given him. 'Brixton Burglar Communes with his Deceased Aunt', followed by half a column of pica. Now Timothy was Irish—and the law of association invariably brings Irish and trouble together with the same *eclat*, let's call it, as steak and onions, bacon and eggs, or gin and ginger. Timothy opened a *salon* where Believers (with a capital B) might congregate to invoke the spirits of the mighty dead or the less mighty but dead. If you start a bum joint for crooked poker with the roof off, only tourists will patronise you—and nowadays they carry Cook's cheques. But if you call it a *Salon D'Art* (palming the missing card into a royal flush is an art) and hire a motherly lady to sell the chips, everyone from blue-blooded patricians to Broadway gold-diggers will honour your place.

Timothy explained to his clients that he had gone to great trouble and expense in engaging a world-famous medium (she was wanted by the police of five countries, and if that is not fame, what is?) from Paris, because he was afraid that quacks would undermine the faith of the public in spiritualism which was more than a science: it was a religion. And so on for forty minutes and three drinks.

He did not propose to take even the small fee that was necessary, unless he could produce results. In other words, no spirit, no specie. Call up whom you like any time between 5 and 11 p. m. Engagements strictly in rotation. Half rates for near relations. About a month after his *salon* had opened, I met Timothy at an imitation Baumgarten in Third Avenue where real Buddweiser was obtainable. When I saw that he was standing drinks instead of cadging them, I gave him the brother-sign and in a minute we were chatting as if he had never owed me twenty dollars. It was then, he gave me details of his enterprise—more or less a *resume* of his 'first speech to clients' with the sole difference that he was gracious enough to treat me as a fellow sharper and explain how the ramp was worked. He ended with an invitation to be present at the next seance. Things were none too good with me at the moment, what with this sudden Federal drive against honest silvertongues, and the increasing reluctance of the public to believe in the gold-brick yarn or the Spanish prisoner stuff, even with variations. So I accepted, making a mental reservation as to the amount I was going to borrow off Timothy.

The medium was Tim's flash skirt, and believe me, she looked clairvoyant. Attributable mainly to belladonna in the eyes and a *chic* Parisian ghost-coiffure.

We were ranged in a half circle round her and the lights were blacked out. Tim, of course, took no active part in the proceedings. His was the 'boy stood on the burning deck' role in the background.

A studious-looking guy with glasses was first on the list; and he had a list of questions in his hand, too. There was no time-wasting with him. He asked for "Julius Caesar, please," with the same coolness as he might have dialled Harlem 703421 on any Friday night. Exchange, in the form of the Medium, did not delay him. Caesar was on tap immediately; and before being asked, stated benevolently that it was all fine over there, and he was quite happy and he wished we could come over, too. I registered a mental protest, because Caesar, to my certain knowledge, was seated two blocks away in a very stuffy sound-proof room, with a detector and mike in front of him and a highball at his elbow.

"Are you in touch with present events, Caesar?"

Caesar said he was, more or less.

"Well, what do you think of the prospects of another war in the near future?"

Caesar said there would certainly be a war unless existing conditions changed with some rapidity. (He was holding out on Tim for a rise and the matter was, so to speak, still in the air.)

"Will the U. S. A. be involved?"

There was a short silence and then we were told with due solemnity that it all depended.

"On what?"

"Circumstances, of course. Rockefeller and Roosevelt and Ford...and...and Ellsworth Vines." This a little vaguely.

"How long will it last?"

"Till the other side gets its slats busted..."

I noted it down for future reference. Caesar had no right to plagiarise American slang. However, that finished our polytechnic friend and he sat down, dimly conscious of disappointment. The chief thing that struck me about this seance was the total absence of materialised hands clutching at the air and ghostly veils dancing an atmospheric Carioca. Evidently Tim intended only one hand to do any clutching—his own.

An ageless sort of dame who might have been twin sister to the previous interviewer (only she wasn't, because I found out afterwards that they were engaged to be married) called for William Pitt.....There was a little delay because Timothy was not quite sure who William Pitt was. But he had to take a chance, so he switched on the general emergency map from downstairs. Pitt

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informed us, was swell on the other side and how he wished we could join him. He had been afraid of death, but now he wished everybody were dead because it was so pleasant to die. Conan Doyle and three or four highbrows were standing around as he was speaking and they also wished we were dead. The conversation had turned into a morbid monologue and I was relieved when the lady asked him what he thought of the N. R. A.

It turned out ten minutes later that she had made a grievous mistake because he spouted for that length of time about the wrong methods of Roosevelt and the wickedness of repealing prohibition (which had provided so many honest bootleggers with a living). The picture he drew of the bootleggers' starving families brought tears to our eyes. Then he switched on to corruption among the Federals and only ceased after Tim had gone down and kicked him silently but viciously, round the room. The lady was appalled at the blood she had unleashed, so in her next question changed the topic.

"Does the League of Nations serve any useful purpose?" Unfortunately Pitt who was slightly deaf heard 'Notions' for 'Nations' and gallantly replied, 'The answer's a lemon.' This happened to suit the questioner, who took it to mean that the League was a wash-out.

"Will the year 1935 be in any way like the critical times you passed through?" Mr. Pitt was evidently doubtful about what critical times she was alluding to, so he wisely suggested that though there were points of resemblance, there was perhaps no marked similarity. We were pretty fed up with the dialogue by this time and when she desisted, a youthful spiritualist raised a feeble cheer quickly suppressed, without evoking any disapproval.

It was getting a bit late and Tim was probably feeling urgently in need of some '3 point 2' to buck him up. He announced that the next client would be the last; and eventually this privilege was conceded to a lingerie drummer who carefully parked his chewing gum on the arm of his chair before speaking.

Unfortunately he was afflicted with a stammer and was about to be given Washington when it transpired that he wanted his uncle Wilmer. As Tim had confided to me the 'relation' part of the business was the easiest. Usually, as in fortune telling, the poor simp told you all he wanted to find out if you knew.

In exactly nine seconds Wilmer was speaking—and he sounded remarkably like Julius Caesar. He wanted

to know if it was his dear nephew calling for him. The drummer said "Y-y-y-es it's your nephew Jim." After which there was silence for a while. Then "H-h-how did you feel when you were about to die, Uncle?" The question didn't seem in the best of taste but Uncle Wilmer's reply was even more surprising. "I was foully murdered" he declared in 'heavy-lead' tones. "Your aunt poisoned me with arsenic." Tim groaned softly. Wilmer had gone too far with the highballs, and this was the result. He always was a reckless guy after a certain amount of highland-dew.

The drummer gasped. "I never knew you were married, Uncle." Wilmer rose to the emergency with admirable presence of mind.

"It was a secret marriage. The parlour maid was my wife." Again there was a hitch. "There were no maids in the place we stayed, Uncle. Dad nursed you." Here Tim thought it time to interfere and cut him off. "The seance will now end," he said but it didn't. At least not in the way he intended it to. The drummer resumed his chewing gum and with scarcely a pause for mastication spoke. "Sez you," he grunted accurately if inelegantly. The lights came on just in time to show perfectly the Federal star he was exhibiting.

"A dick," gasped Tim, stumped for the moment. And the drummer without a trace of a stutter repeated, "Sez you!" This time however he continued in staccato sentences. "Names and addresses everybody, please. We may not require your evidence but it's good to be on the safe side."

Then the real seance started. Because it became evident that we had been in very good company indeed. On all sides there were Winston Churchills, Stanley Baldwins, Jack Dempseys, Joan Crawfords and Elissa Landis.

Did it feeze the cop? I'll say it didn't!

He took it all down without a trace of emotion and Tim's name, when it was given, sounded positively plebeian by contrast. "All right, the lot of you—you can go. I'll be needin' you—and you" (this to the medium) "on the usual charge."

There was a stampede for the door. Outside, I found myself alone and remembered then only that I hadn't touched Tim for anything after all. My only consolation was that I had given my name as Mark Twain.

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